

CANADA'S

WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

# Maclean's

JULY 6, 1998

**THE WALKER MURDER TRIAL**

## DEATH AND DECEIT



### **The Victim**

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Channel



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Hockey great Serge Savard was a formidable presence in the NHL for 15 years. Now he is applying that competitive spirit to the world of business—and to advancing federalism in Quebec



# From The Editor

## A sense of humor helps



**B**y the time Joe Clark got to India during a world tour in 1979, the Tory Opposition leader was 10 points ahead of Pierre Trudeau's Liberals in the Gallup poll and he was a prime minister in waiting. But the trip

was going badly and Clark was reeling from published accounts of scheduling snafus, dysentery, parties and lost luggage. While his aides sweated the details, and his wife cheered about the bad press, Clark remained remarkably affable. One night in Delhi he called a reporter in his room and joked about a trip to a tailor to buy a pair of slacks—who to replace ones that had been left in Bangkok when his suitcase had not been put on a connecting flight to India. Clark chuckled that he thought he knew why he only paid \$14 for the pants—a tag stitched into the belt read, SUB-STANDARD. That the embattled Progressive Conservative leader would tell the story on himself indicates his healthy sense of humor, something that Clark may need as he makes yet another run for the party's top job. As he said last week in declaring his candidacy "I have pounds call me 'Yesterday's Man' I prefer the interpretation that I was a little ahead of my time." Time will tell.

Fortunately for politics-wary Canadians, Clark is not the only candidate for the 1984 Tory leadership who can crack a joke at his own expense. The other leading candidates, Hugh Segal, a veritable stand-up comic on the stump, his off-dinner quips having filled banquet halls from Sherbrooke to Port Alberni.

Clark and Segal also share other party lineage. Both come from the so-called Red Tory wing of the party and both were long-serv-



Clark declaring his candidacy, he's back

ing backroom boys—a tag usually reserved for Segal who served both prime minister Brian Mulroney and Ontario premier Bill Davis in a senior adviser. But Clark also has served hard time. By the time he became an MP in 1970, Clark had written campaign speeches for reckless Alberta Tory leader Cam Stelmach in the 1968 election and worked for Steve Fallon's unsuccessful federal Tory leadership bid in 1967, then joined the staff of the new leader, Robert Stanfield. Segal has run for office twice, but lost both times. By total coincidence, Segal also once dated Margaret McFeen, many years before she married Clark.

Last week, Clark indicated that he is going to shy away from specific policy statements, while Segal is planning a series of campaign demonstrations on the top issues. There is even talk about taking on the banks about mergers, a bold move that clearly would mark Segal as defender of the little guy—an appropriate role for the candidate cast in the underdog. Taking a stand would help bring some needed focus to a campaign that suffers from a quick flow—the party does not have enough money to mount a series of votes will be held around the country. The format as a prescription for blindness and will not help a fifth place parliamentary party looking for attention. What would save the day is a sharp debate on issues. It also might provide voters with reasons to see the Tories as more than a pale imitation of the federal Liberals.

*Robert Lewis*

## Newsroom Notes:

### From the courtroom

Anyone who expected British justice to serve up an O.J. Simpson-like extravaganza of a trial, fugitive Canadian kidnaper Albert Walker went on trial for murder in Exeter, England, was in for a rude surprise. As Maclean's London Bureau Chief Barry Carne noted, it took less than an hour to select the Walker jury. Witnesses were questioned and



Walker, Carne fight no media circus

excused in efficient succession. The be-wigged lawyers indulged in none of the posturing that marked the eight-month Simpson trial. And there was no media circus. In Britain, lawyers do not talk to the media during a trial, and the judge instructed reporters that they could report what was said in his courtroom—and nothing else. "British justice could probably have disposed of O.J. in two or three weeks," Carne says. Carne, who took over the London bureau earlier this year, wrote the main cover story. Senior Writer O'Arcy Jensen wrote about Walker's earlier life in Ontario. The cover package was edited by World Editor Berton Woodward.

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six years at the CBC's *The National*. Robertson has been broadcasting for more than 46 years and anchors Canada's most watched national news, *CTV News*.

Thomas Carson  
Vice president, communications  
CTV  
Toronto

I've often thought that our country must have the highest per capita incidence of talent in the world. With a population of fewer than 30 million people, we've produced so many writers, actors, dancers, entertainers, musicians, poets, artists and whatever other category fits into the definition of creativity. Is such endeavor fabled by the long winter nights?

Diana MacIntosh,  
Mississauga

ABC's *Kevin Newman* and *Jeopardy!*, *Jeopardy!*

## Canadian talent

I am writing in response to your June 22 cover story ("America by Canadians"). It is unfortunate that most of our great talent, whether it be actors, comedians or news anchors, are forced to go south of the border in order to better their careers and wages. However, the people in your article should make Canadians proud because they are great representatives of our country. I am so proud of my country, it is the best place to live and it is great when others acknowledge this.

Michael Grund,  
Calgary

In the June 22 cover story titled "The Case data wave," you write: "With a total of 23 years anchoring national newscasts [Peter] Jennings has done no longer than anyone—even the venerable Walter Cronkite." For your information, Walter Cronkite, chief anchor and senior news editor of CTV News, has a total of 28 years on a national news anchor with 22 years at CTV News and

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

should be addressed to:  
Magazine's Editorial Letters  
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## 'Godspeed, Dr. Foth'

The absence of Allan Fotheringham's column will be surely missed by this subscriber for the next few weeks. I wish and the doctor, "Newsroom Notes," June 22. Having been diagnosed and treated for benign prostatic hyperplasia three years ago, I can only imagine what it must be like to be informed that cancer has developed in the prostate. Godspeed, Dr. Foth. Your devoted fans look forward to reading your words of wisdom in the very near future.

Gary J. Cook,  
Toronto

Western Ontario had one of the most compassionate people I had ever run into. Guess what? Her daughter is also learning disabled. We discovered that my daughter, Anna's, test results differed widely from morning to afternoon, that she had patterned problems and a host of others that translate into an inability to grasp certain abstract ideas, and a coping mechanism that is just short of brilliant. Now, she has, in fact, been accepted to college into the childhood education program. Imagine the talents we would lose if these children do not get the help that they deserve.

Joyful Kalk,  
Burlington, Ont.

Your article on children with learning disabilities was excellent. My five-year-old son has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. His first year of school has been a long one for both him and me, filled with meetings and appointments. I know now that I will have to fight for everything he needs. All children are special and each one deserves the best education we can provide. It is going to be a long battle, but it will be one that my son will win.

Joan Leslie,  
Stratford, Ont.

The title "Battling the system" was aptly chosen. Entering the schools six years ago, I brought into the principals of many struggles between school and home, and I believed that teachers would be 1) competent in identifying learning difficulties and 2) forthcoming in reporting them to the parents. From harsh experiences as my children's expense, I know now that teachers are not necessarily knowledgeable, that the child's good is not the paramount action. Our parents are blacklisted, that principals are politicians, ingratiating yet always protective of the system. I am left with anger at the heart inflicted on my child because the poor results on a test taken, unknown to us, five years ago were kept

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Backstage



## Anthony Wilson-Smith

### Joe Clark: the perils of yesteryear

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Joe Clark was external affairs minister in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government, he used to occasionally invite journalists to after-noon briefings outlining Canada's position on various issues. For up to 90 minutes, without notes, Clark would field questions on such matters as the progress of democracy in the East Bloc, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the changing of governments in Latin America. No matter the issue, Clark always gave a laconic performance: self-assured, informed and interrogative. Even journalists who had been posted to some of the regions he discussed were startled by his knowledge. Of any minister to hold the portfolio in the past three decades, only the incumbent, Lloyd Jewett, is arguably his equal.

That is one reason to admire Clark. In the wake of his decision to run again for the Progressive Conservative leadership, some Tories will serve up other reasons, and reminders. Among them: Clark's gracious concession speech to Mulroney after losing the 1985 leadership race, and the non-partisan way he confronted alongside Jean Chrétien in the 1986 Quebec referendum—less than three months after the Liberals knocked him from the prime minister's office. Clark is a decent and defeated man, a son of the West, and a friend of Quebec at times when it has not been easy to be both. If he wins the leadership, he would guarantee the Tories some attention and credibility.

So why do so many people—especially Tories—think it already is yesteryear? Consider five issues. All will be put forward, and if Clark cannot adequately answer them, he will either not win the leadership—or worse, inherit a challenge he has provoked for himself.

**Quebec.** Clark has been joined within the province for everything from his playing but successful of elections at French to his openness on constitutional reform. Then, Quebecers invariably vote for someone else. In the 1979 election, the Clark-led Tories won two of the province's 75 seats. In 1986, they won one. In the 1997 election, the Tories, led by francophone Quebecer Jean Charest, could only win five seats, including Charest's own. True, the other leading candidate, Hugh Segal, might not do better (although his quick colloquial street French, reflecting his working-class Montreal roots, is more comfortable to the ear of many Quebecers than that of Clark). But if credibility in Quebec is considered one of Clark's main planks, it makes for an awkward time platform.

**The West.** Losing in Quebec is a price the Tories would pay if they could regain their former hold on the West. But that is Reform country now: they won 60 of the 68 seats in the four provinces west of Ontario in the last election, while the Tories won one. Never mind

the suggestion that Reformers will be drawn to the Clark-led Tories because they are another right-wing party led by a westerner. To be contrary, many Reformers joined the party precisely because of people like Clark, who they consider betrayed his Western roots and became too attached to established Ontario interests. In Ontario, the Tories need to move beyond that despite, not relieve it.

**Dismissing the Right.** To rise again, the Tories need to swing voters away from one of two camps—the Liberals or Reform. From an ideological perspective, Segal and Clark are both pinkish Tories. So was Charest—and for the most part, he failed to move voters away from the Liberals. If Clark and Segal regain front-runners, the race ignores the fundamental debate the Tories need to have:

to win, how to unite the right. For better or worse, many voters unite behind one or the other—and lose a Tory candidate from the right like, say, former Reform MP Jan Sigsby. The future of the party could be decided in that fashion. If the only question is whether voters want a small "c" conservative government based more on pragmatism than principle, the answer is Yes, in Prime Minister Jean Charest's Liberals, they already have one.

**Aging.** Many young voters say they are turned off by politics because they don't share the values and experiences of elected politicians who are often much older. A man of Clark's age (59) should have many vigorous years remaining (just ask Chrétien (66) or Finance Minister Paul Martin (60 in August)). But as Clark contends, the most the Tories can hope for in the next election, likely in 2002, is to become the official Opposition.

Then, their real shot at power might not take place until 2007. By then, Clark will be 65 years old—and many voters will not even have been born when he was first elected to Parliament 35 years previously, in 1972.

**Too much experience.** That is what Chrétien always sarcastically said he was being accused of when detractors called him "yesterday's man." But in Clark's case, it may be true. Yes, he was an excellent foreign minister—but when he was opposition leader, he caused a furor in the Middle East by proposing Canadian embassy in Israel should be moved to Jerusalem. While he was a respectful hearing in Quebec, nationalists will never forget his 1992 comment to the effect that the debate over Quebec secession could eventually result in "another Lebanon"—blood and all. He may have been right about the need to raise gasoline taxes 18 cents a gallon in 1979—the measure which deflated his government. They don't need to secure the fact that his misreading of the issue cost him his government.

Politics, after all, really is the art of the possible. That becomes all the more difficult if debates about policy involve (pace around who was right yesterday than what is right for tomorrow).

To succeed,  
the next Tory  
leader must be  
able to rise  
above the issues  
of the past



# Opening NOTES

Edited by  
TANYA  
DAPPEL

## Diplomatic trouble in Lebanon

Andrew Robinson might have expected better. The Canadian special coordinator for the Middle East peace process was in Lebanon last week, picking up \$2.9 million in new aid for Palestinian refugees in that country, including \$1.1 million from Canada—enough to help a war-torn Lebanon. Instead, Ottawa-based Robinson found himself in the centre of a vicious eruption of accusations—newspapers in Beirut called him everything from American lackey to Israeli agent.

It began with a rumor that Robinson was in Lebanon to try to convince the government to retaliate the 350,000 Palestinian refugees who live there—as it was unpopular with both the refugees, who have waited 30 years to go home to what now is Israel, and with the Lebanese, who would be glad to see them go. The theory runs that Canada, which chairs the refugee working group in the multilateral talks, would be bowing to Arafat and Israeli pressure to put to rest something about the refugees in order to speed up the aid-giving process. Last week, the ministry of foreign affairs would say little about the career diplomat's travels, except that the rumors were silly and Canada has no such policy on internationalization. But Lebanese government officials say Robinson tried to pressure Prime Minister Rafic Hariri to relax a Lebanese law banning refugees from holding any but the lowest jobs. Robinson later said he was not "successful" in Lebanon of assisting refugees. Nonetheless, refugees called him a "promote Israel" in state letters to the press, and school children blocked the entrance to a campaign was suspected to risk. If never say being Mr. Nice Guy



Kills' using blockade, rumors of bombing

## CAPITAL CONFIDENTIAL

Things are seldom as they seem in the broader world of international diplomacy. Consider the triffid-like that Greece's Hellenic Olympic Committee recently sent to representatives of all 240 members of the United Nations General Assembly. Visit Athens, site of the first Olympic Games, unfold the caresses, and then spend five days crawling around the Acropolis complex in the company of the committee. The goal, according to Toronto Daily News, a spokesman at the Greek Embassy in Ottawa, is to push support for an international race during all Olympic Games. But the athletes would cry foul because it comes at the same time as Greece's bid to win a rotating seat on the UN Security Council, which will be decided by a General Assembly vote in October.

Greece, the Netherlands and Canada are seeking seats being vacated at the end of the year by Sweden and Portugal. Nonetheless, UN sources say, the lobbying for two-year Security Council seats is to be more subtle. "If Greece wants to do something like that, it is its business," says Bob Zoega, press attaché at the Netherlands' UN mission in New York City. "We will continue to emphasize our involvement with the Third World." As for Canadian officials who declined to comment on, or accept, the Greek tactic, the strategy is simple—what one UN source calls a "ball court" ploy.

But there is silver. The prize here will only a few months to win the idea that everyone benefits from giving Canada a seat, even though there's no luxury cruise in the offing.

## EMPORIUM

According to the National Council on Welfare, the percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in poverty, in 1986, 21; in 1989, 15.

The best North American film of all time, according to the American Film Institute's top 100 list: Citizen Kane (1941). Ranked 100 was Fanny Hill (1942).

## GOLDFARB POLL

Holiday season has arrived, and serious Canadians have changed dramatically since last year; most will not be staying too far from home. And men—almost a third—may be vacationing at all. Predictably, those with higher incomes are more likely to travel outside the country. The percentage of Canadians who, in the past year, vacationed:

	Total	R.C.	Proves	Out.	Quo	Atlantic	Monthly Income		
							Less than \$25,000	\$25,000-\$50,000	\$50,000 and up
Inside Canada	49	46	52	44	52	54	47	56	44
Outside Canada	11	13	8	16	5	4	8	11	17
Both	12	19	16	14	6	3	5	11	25
None	29	21	25	24	38	38	40	19	14

Goldfarb's Confidential, 1990

## DOUBLE TAKE

### Tommy Hunter

Tommy Hunter loves to talk. Ask him about his last, the 33rd annual "Tommy Hunter Show" and he'll tell you about his backup band and one of his hit songs—and he'll say enthusiastically "I'm on the water as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring." Or mention Georgian Bay where he spends much of the summer cruising, and he replies "I'd be grateful to be a resident in the world." But when the conversation turns to the Tommy Hunter Show and why it lasted 27 years on CBC television, the 61-year-old country singer becomes modest and self-effacing. He attributes the program's success to his wife, to people ranging from Johnny Cash and Tammy Wynette to Garth Brooks and Shania Twain—no everyone, that is, but the affable host. "I understand our audience," says Hunter, who lives in Peterborough, Ont., with his wife, Shirley. They have three grown sons. "I respect the fact that people brought me into their living rooms."

The show aired from 1965 until 1982, when the CBC cancelled it. Since then, he has toured coast to coast, performing 65 to 70 concerts a year. Hunter says he continues giving shows for the love, not the money, since he is financially secure. And he still has an act to perform, something he acquired at age 3 when his father, James, a railway worker, and mother, Edith, an amateur pianist, took him to a travelling Grand Ole Opry show in his native London, Ont. "I inspired me," he says. "I decided that what I wanted to do was to sing I want. And he has never looked back."

How in 1980 (top) attach



## POP MOVIES

### Just by soccer

Just in time for the World Cup comes *Fever Pitch*, a British film about the life of a die-hard soccer fan. Based on the bestselling 1992 autobiography of the same title, the comedy features Paul, a teacher who is a passionate Arsenal fan. When he falls in love with Sarah, his life seems complete—except for one detail—where doesn't the soccer fan?

Topgross in Canada week ending Sept. 25	1	The X-Files (R)	23,794,660
2	Milk (G)	12,467,000	
3	The Truman Show (R)	12,145,000	
4	Six Days Seven Nights (R)	12,265,800	
5	A River Made (G)	6,979,800	
6	Garri Kady (R)	6,979,800	
7	Kentucky (G)	6,979,800	
8	Big Mom (G)	6,979,800	
9	Simple Plan (R)	6,979,800	
10	The House of the Dead (G)	6,979,800	



## BEST-SELLERS

### FICTION

1. *White Noise* by John Barth
2. *Eden of the East* by John Barth
3. *The Unbearable Automaticity of Being* by John Barth
4. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth
5. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth
6. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth
7. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth
8. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth
9. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth
10. *The World Is a Stage* by John Barth

### NONFICTION

1. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
2. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
3. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
4. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
5. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
6. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
7. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
8. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
9. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth
10. *Understanding World Politics* by John Barth

### With families, is small beautiful?

A father of only one child, Al S. actor Bill McKibben delivers 400-episode and the continental view of family life in *Myer: A Personal and Environmental Approach for Single-Child Families* (Delacorte). Going scientific studies, he also argues that only children are better educated than kids with siblings.

### SEPARATING

Hollywood stars Bruce Willis 43, and Debra Moore, 35, in Los Angeles. The two were married in 1987, and have three children.

### RELEASED

Whitewater figure Susan McDougal, 43, from prison for medical treatment on her spine, after serving four months of her two-year sentence, in Little Rock, Ark. As part of the Clinton Whitewater scandal, McDougal was convicted in 1996 of fraud involving an illegal loan from a federal lending company. She will be in probation for three years.

## Passages



**PAROLED:** Former hockey star Alan Eagleson, 65, after serving one-third of his 18-month sentence for fraud and theft in Toronto. Eagleson—who was disbarred by the Law Society of Upper Canada and stripped of his Order of Canada after his January conviction—has a statement of intent and report to a parole officer after his July 7 release.

**DIED:** Singer-songwriter Bobby Gentry, 73, in North Bay, Ont. Gentry shot to fame in 1967 with the anthem *De Jager*, which topped the Canadian charts for most of the Christmas Year.

**DIED:** Actor Maureen O'Sullivan, 87, in Phoenix, Ariz. O'Sullivan is best known for her role as Jane in *Boys of the Apron* (1932) and the sequel, and as actor Max Farrow's mother.

**DIED:** Former Dodgers general manager Al Campanis, 81, of coronary artery disease, in Fullerton, Calif. Campanis led the team to a World Series title in 1981, but was forced to resign in 1987 after stating on television that blacks lacked "the necessities to be managers and executives" in baseball.

**AWARDED:** To Battista Salazar, golfer Darrin Hawk, 33, the Hart Memorial Trophy as National Hockey League MVP, the Moose in top goals, and for most outstanding player in voted by his peers, the Lester B. Pearson Award at the annual NHL award ceremony in Toronto.

**SEPARATING:** Hollywood stars Bruce Willis 43, and Debra Moore, 35, in Los Angeles. The two were married in 1987, and have three children.

**MARRIED:** Home Aline star Macaulay Culkin, 17, and Broadway actor Rachel Miner 17, in Connecticut.

**RELEASED:** Whitewater figure Susan McDougal, 43, from prison for medical treatment on her spine, after serving four months of her two-year sentence, in Little Rock, Ark. As part of the Clinton Whitewater scandal, McDougal was convicted in 1996 of fraud involving an illegal loan from a federal lending company. She will be in probation for three years.

# Power player

Former Canadiens hockey great Serge Savard scores for Canada—and the city of Montreal

BY ANTHONY WILSON SMITH

To any hockey fan of a certain age, the expression "hockey boss" is dominated by its off-beat, knowledgable nose-and-stripping suit, flat-topped presence remains as familiar as the renowned "hockey man" that Serge Savard perfected in 15 seasons as a Montreal Hockey League defenceman. One walk of Savard's 23rd-floor office, in a building overlooking the Molson Centre, home of the Montreal Canadiens, is filled with mementoes from a career that won him election to the Hockey Hall of Fame—and the Stanley Cup 19 times as a Canadian player and executive. There are photographs of Savard holding the Cup aloft, and a print depicting Paul Henderson celebrating after the goal that gave Team Canada victory over the Czechoslovakians in their 1972 medalist. "It was the proudest moment of my life," says Savard, a key member of that team.

Today, the 52-year-old Savard's position for Canada still has its brightness. He often wears the Order of Canada pin he was awarded in 1994, and in the second straight year, is charting Canada Day festivities for Quebec. Savard has expanded his credit into a freestyle entrepreneur. For the past two weeks, he has been crisscrossing Quebec, meeting with officials in the largest municipalities in order to revive celebrations that were long moribund. That, says Glen Sather, president of the Edmonton Oilers and a longtime friend, is typical. "Serge is a guy who gives everything for what he believes in," Sather says. "When he wants something, it gets done."

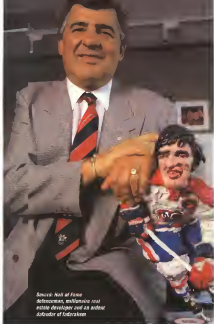
In other ways, Savard's enthusiasms have taken a different turn. Since being fired as the Canadiens in October, 1986, after 13 years as managing director, Savard built a new career as a millionaire developer, hotel owner, investor, and business and political power broker. Although Savard will not say how much he is worth, the real estate company in which he holds a one-third share owns more than 300 properties, ranging from apartment buildings and industrial plants to hotels. The best-known property is Montreal's Marquis Chateau, in which the company—Chateau, Meunier, Savard et Associés—holds a consortium that holds half-interest.



Canada Day parades in Montreal are enjoying the privilege to attract long-moribund celebrations

Savard's personal share in the hotel alone is estimated to be worth \$1.2 billion. On a personal level, in addition to the luxurious home that Savard owns on Montreal's South Shore, he has two ski chalets in Quebec and a condominium on exclusive Hilton Head Island in South Carolina. "Never could all be done in hockey—Serge is only now lifting his peak," insists his close friend, former Liberal cabinet minister Jacques Giguère.

A curious twist in Savard's Montreal these days is that it is difficult to find an agency that Savard is not involved in. Although he built much of his real-estate empire while still a player and hockey executive, Savard has become much more active in community work since then. "He is one of the few high-level people who really gives his time to the community," says Michel C. Auger, political columnist at the newspaper *Le Journal de Montréal*. Savard belongs to a committee of businessmen trying, as a voluntary basis, to sell enough season tickets to keep the Montreal Expos franchise in the city. He recently did the same for the Montreal Accorion. On the amateur level, he is a past chairman of the Quebec Games, and is currently leading a business group that has raised \$3 million to refurbish Montreal's Marquis Richard Ave, a popular site for amateur teams that is named after one of Savard's idols. And he became chairman last month of the Montreal International Sports Committee—a group trying to lure major events to the city.



Savard: Not of Fosse defencesmen, millionaire real estate developer and an ardent defender of federalism

On another front, Savard—long ago dubbed "Le Sentinier" because of his interest in politics—is publicly supporting Jacques Duchesneau, the former Montreal police chief who is a front runner in the city's mayoralty race. When Daniel Johnson stepped down as leader of the Quebec Liberals in March, there were speculation rumors that the party was courting Savard. He says that, "far from" he has an interest in elected politics. But he describes Liberal leader Jean Charest as "a friend" and considers his reluctance to enter politics "could change some day." And, Savard adds, "I promise this, if there is another referendum, I will be there to speak up for my country."

That sentiment, of course, is not universally popular in Quebec, where polls show that francophones are evenly divided between federalism and sovereignty. Olivier says his friend's outspoken stance "has cost him big, big money," and that some anti-sovereignist economists relate to the business with him that, says Savard, "for too long people have been silent because they are afraid of what it means for business. I don't care about that. If I lose the business of someone like Bernard Landry, so what?" (The deputy premier, one of the most vehement sovereigntists in the Parti Québécois, has clashed with Savard on occasion.) Meanwhile, Savard has cleverly exploited his hockey contacts to help his business interests. When his group bought the Chateau Champlain in 1984, so winning NHL teams stayed there. Popular local food—and rather mundane—food—Savard made one telephone call to Sather, one of the most respected and well-connected executives in the league. Within 24 hours, almost every NHL team had switched to his hotel. "Why not?" says Sather. "Serge makes sure everybody is taken care of, and our players consider it a thrill to eat here." Savard, in fact, often greets the teams when they arrive at the hotel.

Some skeptics suggest that Savard's interest in the Expos is enhanced by the fact that the team's proposed new ball park would be several hundred metres from the hotel. But, says Auger, "even his worst enemies know that the hotel is doing so well it doesn't need new business." (The Chateau Champlain has 400 rooms, more than 10 million in revenues, and its occupancy rate averages over 80 per cent—making it one of Montreal's most popular hotels.) When it comes to business, Savard's aggressive style mirrors his efforts as an athlete—and has arguably been just as successful. "Serge was a guy who knew early on exactly what he wanted," says Sam Pollock, chairman of the Toronto Blue Jays and former general manager of the Canadiens. "Even in his teens, he was more focused than guys a decade older."

Born and raised in the Abitibi region of northern Quebec, Savard attracted the attention of Canadiens scouts at the age of 14—by which time he had reached his full height and 220 lb. He played junior hockey for teams around the Montreal area controlled by the Canadiens. At the insistence of his father, a longtime community activist with a keen interest in politics, he travelled enough private tutoring to graduate from high school. In his early 20s, after turning professional with the Canadiens, Savard began purchasing distressed apartment buildings at low cost and refurbishing them. His business acumen was enough to make Savard stand out as a sport where only a minority of players owned their own affairs. "Serge is the only player I ever knew," says longtime hockey broadcaster and author Dick Leven, "who spent part of every day reading *The Wall Street Journal*."

In his personal life, Savard is a curious mix of flamboyance and reserve. Despite the fact that he served as captain of the Canadiens for two seasons, Savard admits that he was not close to teammates. "I am not the kind of guy who socialized with other players," he says. "I don't remember ever going out for dinner with another player and his wife." But Savard's leadership qualities were unmistakable, says Bob Givens, a former teammate and now general manager of the Dallas Stars. "He had intelligence and moral strength," says Givens, who adds, "I still call Serge sometimes to ask him about hockey matters."

A stylish dresser who favors double-breasted suits that are over-

fully out to diagnose some of the chaos might be his pet on ice playing days. Seward likes big cigars and sports such expensive accessories as an all-Black watch and Moët & Chandon pen. Despite his high profile, he usually dodges the media and is very conscious of his image. Seward "loves good wine and food," says Oliver, and is a longtime regular at Le Musée Orléans, a popular restaurant among the city's power elite. After long lunches, with wine, a single day in as executive at the Canadiens, he would often call for two taxi drivers to get home, one to drive him in a cab, and the other to drive his car. Seward was concerned that his image might suffer if his car was seen parked downtown overnight. But since leaving hockey, says Oliver, "Serge does those long lunches a much less. He spends more time with his family." A recent grandfather by his 30-year-old son, Serge Jr., Seward and his wife, Prudence, have another son, Marc, 27, and a 17-year-old daughter, Catherine. He is also an enthusiastic and regular golfer, with a 12 handicap.

And his achievements, the one thing that makes Seward admit, is the manner in which he was dismissed by the Canadiens, along with coach Jacques Lemaire, after the team stumbled after a losing start in the 1995-1996 season. Although his company has a part share of season tickets and Seward attends some games, he makes no secret of his bitterness toward the team president, Ronald Curran. About two years ago, when there was suggestion that The Malcom Companies Ltd., the team owner, might be prepared to sell, Seward put out his name—but was rebuffed. Curran said at the time that he felt discussions took place, but Seward suggests otherwise. "We had money and a specific offer, and they know it," he says.

Market analysts estimate the team's worth, with the Malcom Companies included, would be \$400 million. As to whether he could put together that money if the team were to go back, Seward shrugs and says "Screw it." Curran says that Seward's net worth, he recently estimated the value of his company's real estate holdings at about \$500 million.

One measure of Seward can be found on a Toronto story that Seward told about him. When the two first played against each other in the 2006, Seward, who had a gold tooth, recalls "Serge kept telling me he was gonna knock it out." Later, Seward was playing for the St. Louis Blues against the Canadiens when he took a puck in the mouth that knocked out six teeth—including the gold replacement. Seward walked out, with a nose injury his coach had been killed. He recovered no response.

In 1974, Seward joined the Canadiens. "We went through three weeks of camp and Serge never said anything," he recalls. "It was killing me. Then we went on the road and roared together. We had a pregame steak and went back to have a race. I was drifting off to sleep when I hear Serge calling my name. 'So you know, Seward, I got your God damn tooth.' At the finish of history, Seward is still smiling and says, 'I can you believe that anyone would have the patience and timing to wait that long?' In fact, those are qualities that Seward's friends long ago learned to count on—and his opponents discover to their detriment. □

## 'PIT BILL' UNLEASHED

William Johnson's many detractors do not mind words. "Racist, racist, provocateur" are a few of the angry epithets tossed his way in the month since Johnson took over the helm of Alliance Quebec, the province's English-rights lobby group. But rather than cowering under the criticism, Johnson last week added into more controversy—and outright hostility—by marching in Montreal's Fête Nationale parade. Held to mark the St-Jean-Baptiste holiday, the parade has long been a celebration of Quebec nationalism, and some francophone participants were incensed by the presence of the 67-year-old anglophone activist. One man shoved a pie in Johnson's face while others hurled insults, beer and water before police escorted him away. An hour later, a cheerful Johnson appeared undaunted. The incident, he told reporters, simply revealed the "xenophobia" that underlies the separatist movement. "The only way in which I'm racist," says Johnson, "is I believe in going to the roots of things. And we today exposed some roots."

Johnson also grabbed headlines, which he has done frequently since his election in May. The attention has centered on the more militant course the former Montreal Gazette columnist, who currently writes for the Sun newspaper chain, plans to chart for the 4,000-member lobby group. "Alliance Quebec has always been reactive," says Johnson. "I want to be proactive." Dubbed "Pit Bill" by former media colleagues for his aggressive federalist stance, Johnson wants to push forward with an agenda popular among those who propelled him to the presidency. One key element is a constitutional court challenge of Quebec's restrictions on access to English public schools, a key part of the province's language laws.

He may face some hurdles. None of his supporters at the Alliance Quebec's executive committee. And Johnson has prominent opponents in the anglophone community. Robert Keating, a former head of Alliance Quebec, worries that Johnson will alienate francophones and ultimately hurt the lobby group. "Politics is the art of the possible," says Keating.

"If you don't have a group on that rolling, then you become irrelevant at best." But others are receptive to Johnson's agenda. "I think Johnson has the potential to be effective—provided he brings all anglophones into the fold. Judging from some anglophone reactions, though, Johnson may have to do that. 'I have mixed feelings,'" says Tina Venn, 40, a Montreal business manager. She supports challenging Bill 101, but is skeptical about an overall aggressive approach to Anglo rights. "I think it's a bit too late for that sort of focus," she says.

Some Alliance Quebec members and activists groups have been publicly most about pulling out because of Johnson's confrontational style, but only the English barbers association has left so far. And Johnson clearly disagrees that it is too late for anglophones to demand greater language rights. "We need another language dispute," he asserts, "because we as a community have been allowing bilingualism to erode on the question." Johnson believes anglophones have stayed quietest in the face of Quebec's language laws for fear of a francophone backlash—but he does not share that view. "Let's pursue our rights," says Johnson. "And I don't for a minute believe that the heavens will fall."

GRENDIA ERANOWILL, in Montreal



Brazilian celebratory fever in Canada's multicultural capital



## World Cup fever

For Alain Cloutier, it was a matter of time. Last week, after Norway beat soccer powerhouse Brazil 2-1 in the final of the World Cup in France, the Toronto graphic artist and avid supporter of Norway's soccer team hopped into his bicycle to do a display of Toronto. Wearing his blue-colored, red, blue and white Norwegian flag, Cloutier cycled repeatedly past some Brazilian fans moving to the north end of the parade on Toronto sidewalks after the game. "I thought I'd ride in their faces," says the 36-year-old Cloutier. The Brazilian supporters, whose team had already earned a place in the round of 16 thanks to two earlier victories, barely noticed Cloutier. What did grab their attention—and elicited some jeers—were several Canadian bikers following him.

Nowhere in Canada is the soccer fever as intense as in Toronto, where the flag-waving leader and the flag-waving men followed him in Toronto. According to figures from the 1996 census released by Statistics Canada last February, 13.2 per cent of Canadians identified themselves as a visible minority. The report stated that 94 per cent live in metropolitan areas, mostly in and around Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. Of the three cities, Toronto is home to the widest array of visible minorities and immigrant groups. But what really kicked Toronto fever into the stratosphere in Toronto is that the city is home to two large, ardent groups of fans of the World Cup's most dramatic teams: Brazil, which has won four of the 35 quadrennial events, and Italy, which has won two.

The two teams met in the 1984 final, with Brazil winning in a shootout. And although Brazilians in Toronto number just as the French, their media are swarmed by one of the

chiefest fans from France, qualified for the tournament, which began on June 10 in the Stade de France in a northern suburb of Paris, where it also winds up on July 12. Canada is not among them, but the nation's multicultural ethos ensures that many Canadians still have a vested interest, whether it is in representing their own heritage or that of their parents, grandparents or friends.

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## Soccer fans take over the city's streets

the talk is not irrelevant now. "They've told it down a little," he said, "we've all gotten more used to soccer."

That, it seems, is exactly what is happening. According to the Canadian Soccer Association, soccer is the most popular participation sport in Canada, with 585,755 registered players in 1997, 50,000 more than hockey. Association spokesman Ehsan Hosseini hopes that increased participation translates into a Canadian team playing in the World Cup in 2002, which will be held in Japan and South Korea—and which will, no doubt, result in another bout of soccer fever.

BARBARA WICKENS



\$90,700 or less—about 85 per cent of Canadian families—receive at least some portion of the child tax benefits, a maximum of \$1,000 each year per child for the first two children. On July 1, that maximum will increase to \$1,685 for the first child—and \$1,425 for each additional child. Families with net income up to \$20,921 will receive the maximum, through monthly cheques. Families with incomes between \$20,921 and \$25,921 will receive some portion of the increased amount. Families with incomes above \$25,921 will continue to receive the same benefits as now. Ottawa will add an additional \$425 million to its initial \$593 million on July 1, 2000.

Most provinces, in turn, will use their savings to erode the so-called welfare wall. According to federal estimates in many provinces a parent with two children who leaves social assistance for a job loses child benefits of about \$2,000, plus dental and prescription drug benefits. That parent also faces work-related expenses such as transportation costs, child care, pension and employment insurance premiums and income taxes. As a result, many welfare parents find that work becomes almost prohibitively expensive. The provinces currently provide about

\$2 billion in social-assistance benefits for children—including the \$500 million that they will now be free to redirect. And most have carefully focused their new initiatives to lower the welfare wall. Alberta, for example, has created the Child Health Benefit, which will cover most of the dental, optical, prescription drug and many grocery assistance bills for 150,000 children in working-poor families with net incomes of up to \$20,921. As Alberta Social Services

## Most provinces will aim to erode the welfare wall

Minister De Loyle Uberg told *Maclean's* "Quite frankly, I'm not a huge federalist. But this is a very good example of how governments can work together." Although many social activists have guardedly praised the benefit, they insist that governments should find more funds to fight child poverty in the end, however, many critics concede that the very existence of the new benefit is a step toward a time when Ottawa and the provinces are

squabbling over everything from compensation for lawyers to welfare to the size of employment insurance premiums. They hope that the child tax credit will set a trend for future co-operation in other areas of social policy. Ontario, for one, has agreed to work with Ottawa to expand the \$2.5-billion Canada Milk Income Stabilization Foundation into a joint federal-provincial fund. "Clearly, resources are growing," Premier Mike Harris told *Maclean's*. "So we have tried some different tactics, saying, 'Let's work together on this.'"

Meanwhile, Pettigrew and his provincial counterparts are broadening their discussions into a proposed National Child Accord. That could include federal money for long-term research on families—and perhaps the creation of another fund to expand child-care facilities. Such co-operation amid the federal-provincial clashes is almost startling. Says the Caledon Institute's Bantz, one of the designers of the current tax benefit, "The child program is a little piece of light, a flashlight. My hope is that governments take a page out of their own success—and apply it to other areas of federal-provincial relations. I hope its boundaries don't wear out."

PHOTO BY BRUNDA SARASWELL in Montreal

### REITSMA RESIGNS

Disgraced MLA Paul Reitsma, facing the near-certain prospect of being forced by a recall campaign to give up his seat and reappear before the B.C. legislature, after Reitsma admitted writing phony letters to newspapers in which he praised himself and attacked his opponents, recall proponents had no difficulty collecting the required number of signatures from his constituents.

### ADDING UP THE NUMBERS

A federal government doctor and an independent physician lived by Ottawa said that nearly half of the 12,000 hepatitis C sufferers previously thought to have contracted the disease through transfused blood between 1986 and 1994 were more likely infected through intravenous drug use. Ottawa and the provinces have offered a \$1.5-billion compensation package to those who became infected during that period.

### PARK PROTECTION

Heritage Minister Sheila Copps announced that Ottawa will freeze development in all national parks for one year. Park communities, like those in Banff and Jasper, will be required to develop plans that set community boundaries and establish permanent caps on commercial development while leaving in tact the environment. The plans, which Ottawa must approve, will then be required to go through a series of changes and require parliamentary approval. The plans will also define what can live in parks in order to deliver access by cottage owners.

### TOBACCO CLAMPDOWN

British Columbia ordered tobacco manufacturers to disclose all additives and ingredients in cigarettes. The order includes chemicals used to tint cigarette paper and filters. The province intends to release the information to the public. The company will also have to list tobacco smoke for 44 toxins, including arsenic and hydrogen cyanide.

### GAMBLING PROBLEMS

An Alberta government study found that 39,385 Albertans have a severe gambling problem, up from 44 per cent since 1994. The sharp jump is central to a three-per-cent drop in the overall number of gamblers in the province during the same period. In Ontario, meanwhile, self-public opinion forced the government to cancel plans to expand charity casinos.

## A deal to save salmon

After trying for five years, Canada finally reached a deal on salmon, albeit a short-term one, with Washington state that concerns only chinook and some coho. Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson hailed the one-year pact, announced with Gov. Gary Locke, as a step in the right direction. "This is our opportunity to leave behind the stalemate over who gets to catch the last few fish," he said. The agreement in principle, which will need approval by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, requires fishermen in the state to cut their commercial coho catch by 22 per cent this year. (Coho in the affected U.S. waters migrate to the Fraser River north of Vancouver.) In exchange, Canada will catch 50 per cent fewer chinook, based on U.S. waters.

But other issues remain unresolved. Among them: the lucrative sockeye pruned by B.C. fishermen, endangered, Canadian-born coho that swim in Alaskan waters and the coho sport fishery in Washington. "I congratulate the Americans," said John Radosevich, president of the United Fish and Allied Workers Union. "They have a real deal, we have a bad one." B.C. Premier Glen Clark was even harsher: "This is a blatant giveaway of our interests," Clark said. "I



Anderson (left) with Locke: the right direction

looks like Canada as an its losses, desperate to get a deal." That kind of tension, as well as occasionally acrimonious talks between Canadians and the United States, has marked all attempts at renewing the Pacific Salmon Treaty since its expiration in 1994.

## Federal Court shakeup

Justice Minister Anne McLellan moved to restore confidence in the Federal Court of Canada by appointing Judge John Richardson as associate chief justice and head of the court's trial division. Richardson, a member of the court since 1994, replaces James Brennan, who quit under a cloud in March. Brennan had been criticized for slow progress in three deportation proceedings against alleged Nazi war criminals, and for reportedly saying he would not assign a judge to hear a same-sex rights case or a Jewish judge to preside over a same-sex hearing. McLellan also moved three new judges, while shuffling two others. "I think we are all aware of the concerns that have been expressed about certain aspects of the Federal Court," McLellan said.

The Federal Court was established in 1977 to hear cases involving federal jurisdiction, such as lawsuits against Ottawa or the actions of federally appointed bodies. Last year, the court was the object of widespread criticism when it became known that as a private lawyer a senior justice department official had conspired to Chief Justice John Binnie about Brennan's slow pace in the deportation cases. Brennan subsequently quit—said allegations that the court's impartiality had been compromised by the zoning. The Supreme Court of Canada later ruled that while the moribund should not have occurred, no harm had resulted.



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# DEATH AND DECEIT

A sensational murder trial pits a daughter against her father

From the start, the issue hovered in the background, unspoken yet palpable, creating an atmosphere inside the English courtroom as thick as the morning mist on the surrounding Devon hills. It was there in the voice of the slender young woman in the witness box—the brief, revealing stammer as she sought to explain why she had agreed to pose as her father's wife, the mother of two young children. It was there in the devious sidestepping on the faces of some jury members, especially the older women as they shut their eyes at the silver-haired justice in the dock. And it was broadly stated at by High Court Justice Neil Blundell, resplendent in crimson robes and powdered wig, when he charged the jury from the court's high-backed bench: "I realize that the jury is not a court of law, but it is a court of common sense, and it is your duty to use your common sense in this case."

If there has been a defining moment in Canadian fugitive Albert Johnson Walker's intriguing outlier trial, it probably occurred then. For there are two fascinating tales currently unfolding inside the courtroom within the old Norman walls of Rougemont Castle in Exeter in southwestern England, both of them bizarre. In the center case against the 50-year-old financial entrepreneur from Paris, Ont., prosecutor Charles Barton has been painstakingly retracing the steps the Crown claims Walker took in first methodically ransacking Ronald J. Platt of his identity and fees, on July 30, 1986, killing the British television producer, 56 at the time, by dumping him in the English Channel with an anchor tied to his belt. "The man Walker ultimately murdered was killed because there were two Ronald Platts," Barton, an attorney and florid as TV barrister Rumpole, told the eight women and four men on the jury last week as he outlined the prosecution's argument. "And that was going to prove to be a matter of acute embarrassment to him."

As intriguing as the murder trial itself, however, is the glimmer



Albert Walker in happier times; the Lady Jane (above); Shenna Walker in Paris, Ont., last year (right): the suspense question of the paternity of Shenna's children colors all of the proceedings

it has offered into the life that Walker led while on the run for six years with his daughter Shenna. The pair left Canada in 1964 for a Christian mission to trip in Europe, only to drop completely from sight. Shenna was then 15. When she finally resurfaced after her father's arrest on Oct. 31, 1986, she was the 23-year-old mother of two young daughters, Emily, 3 at the time, and 11-month-old Lillian. And it is the paternity of these two children that colors all of the proceedings in Exeter's courts, giving them a distinctly odorous air. For the identity of the father of Emily and Lillian has never been established. But to her friends and neighbors living nearby of her dislike. In England, Shenna was known as Noel Platt. As for an earlier home, she was the young wife of the middle-aged man posing as Ronald Platt, mother of the two little girls he let everyone assume were his own.

It was into this charged atmosphere that Shenna, one week before her 23rd birthday, stepped last week, appearing as the first of 36 prosecution witnesses. But during 2½ hours of testimony spread over two days, the critical question was never posed, nor even directly addressed, either by prosecutor Barton or the lead defense barrister, Richard Ferguson. There were, to be sure, evasive answers, the first occurring when Shenna, neat in black slacks and plaid jacket, chestnut hair braided short, entered the hushed courtroom on Monday flanked by two court-supplied female attendants, one of whom was holding her hand, the young woman made her way to the witness box without so much as a single glance at the prisoner's dock, where her father sat staring blankly at her. "I want you to look straight ahead," Barton told her in stern tones. "I want you to look at the jury. Will you do that?" For the next 50 minutes, Shenna did precisely that, just as she would do for six or the following day during cross-examination by Ferguson. Not once did her eyes stray to meet Walker's reluctant gaze. But what she told to say about her father was devastating, as much for his legal case—when she claimed he had asked her to be in court—as for the light it cast upon the damage he may have inflicted upon his daughter

Shenna remained composed through all most of her testimony, betraying the odd hint of anxiety by pinning her long, pale hair to her hair with a wayward strand of hair. Only once did she come close to faltering, stumbling briefly over her words when Barton asked why she began to pose as Noel Platt. "My father suggested, because there was a small child, that we should present ourselves as a couple," she replied. "As husband and wife?" Barton inquired. "Yes," she answered quickly.

Shenna's testimony may have been a little compromised, however. But there was something cold, even eerie, about her calm portrayal of her fugitive years as a relatively handsome, albeit transient, outdoors. Her father moved more or less continually from an apartment in London's Chelsea district to Harrogate in north Yorkshire, then down to a Devon coast in the south west until they finally settled in Little London Farmhouse, in the tiny hamlet of Wootton Bassett, 100 km north of London. Her testimony was full of references to rooms so small to accommodate her furniture, attempts to cope with the usual









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STYLING: JANE ROBERTS

# Tears and lost wealth

Albert Walker left behind a trail of pain for his family and dozens of former investors

BY D'ARCY JENISE

For the past 16 months, Sherna Walker has lived quietly with daughters Emily, now 4, and Lily, 2, at her mother Barbara's turn-of-the-century fieldstone home outside the small southwestern Ontario town of Paris. The attractive, dark-skinned 22-year-old sometimes attends Sunday services at a local United Church. From September until June, she taught her older girl to a twice-weekly, preschool program at a public library in the neighboring village of Ayr. Occasionally, she meets friends for drinks at a popular pub overlooking the scenic Grand River, which flows through downtown Paris. But despite the solace of her father, Albert Johnson Walker, and troubling questions about their relationship, local residents seem reluctant to pry into her private life. "People who know her don't mention her father when she's in town," says Ayr collector-owner Steve Black. "And I wouldn't tell anybody who she was if they didn't know her."

The efforts to protect her from unwanted scrutiny are understandable. For most of the past decade, Sherna Walker's life has been marred by turmoil and instability. First, there was the acrimonious breakup of her parents' marriage, which split the family in two. Sherna

and her older sister, Jillian, now 16, chose to live with their mother while a court granted Barbara custody of the two younger children, Deanna, now 16, and Hunter, 16. Then there were her six years on the run with her father, who allegedly fled Canada with as much as \$3.2 million stolen from clients of companies he controlled—Walker's Financial Services Inc. and United Charter Corp. Finally, there was her return to Paris in December, 1986, accompanied by her daughters and followed by a horde of reporters seeking—unsuccessfully—so answer to one of the most disturbing questions raised by the Walker cases: who is the father of Sherna's children?

But for dozens of meekly elderly investors who lost some or all of their life savings when Albert Walker fled Canada, there are more pressing inquiries: how much money is left, and can it be recovered? Their questions may be answered in mid-July when the London, Ont., office of the accounting firm KPMG Inc., which is assisting during the bankruptcy estate of Walker and his company Walker's Financial, applies to an English court to take control of assets known to have belonged to the fugitive investor. Those assets—some of them purchased in the name of victim Ronald Platt—include the software on which Platt was allegedly jailed, oil paintings, gold bars and coin. They are worth an estimated \$800,000 and were seized by police

when they arrested Walker. KPMG is also seizing assets to \$5 bank accounts scattered around England, France, Italy, Switzerland and the Cayman Islands, many of them in the names of other Platts or his former girlfriend Elaine Topps. "We've been able to establish that he controlled those accounts," says Angelo DiAntonio, a London, Ont., lawyer representing KPMG. "The problem is we don't know what's in them."

As investigators try to unravel the financial wreckage, friends and acquaintances in Paris, where Walker lived for 12 years, are still grappling with their conflicting images of the man. Many remember the cheerleader who sat at the same pew every Sunday with his wife and children, sang in the choir and occasionally distributed memorabilia. Some downtown Paris merchants recall a tall, handsome man who was charming, articulate and inevitably well dressed. Others describe Walker as an unshakable businessman with a vision of a network of one-stop financial centers where clients could have their lifetime deposits, set up a retirement account or purchase mutual funds,

government bonds and other products. "He was certainly not epileptic," says John Macrae, who was a securities adviser with Walker's Financial for about seven years before Walker fled. "He wanted to be a wealthy and influential man."

Others have less flattering recollections. Bertha Seaton, a 72-year-old Ayr resident who told Walker her tax and accounting company in the late 1970s, claims she was harassed for weeks with monthly payments to cover the purchase price. Bramford, Ont.-based Inco consultant Jeffery Pirtain once placed a church's money with Walker but says he waited nine months to collect his commission. And Eric Wiener, a 76-year-old retired insurance broker from Bramford, says that in the mid-1970s his late wife, Myrtle, turned down a nephew's \$100,000 offer for her tax and bookkeeping company to accept a higher bid from Walker. But he claims she never received the money, and later declared bankruptcy. "She was very upset," Wiener recalls. "I used to wake up in the middle of the night and she'd be on the side of the bed crying her heart out."

Albert Walker and Barbara McDonald met in 1966 at the University of Waterloo, where she was a student and he was working in the library. Three months later, on Oct. 25, they were married in a chapel at the university, and then lived for a while in Scotland. The couple returned to her home town of Ayr in 1971, around the time her father, Jack McDonald, died, and the following year their first child, Jillian, was born. They attended Knox United in Ayr and he served as a youth counselor, taught Sunday school and was made a church elder.

But professionally he seemed to be trying to find his calling. In the 1970s when he got married, Walker worked as a machine at a factory, a laborer for a local supply company, a cattle herder and a life insurance salesman. He also took four university courses, in history, education, creative writing, computer training and business administration, each at a different institution. "There was always some excuse why the job wasn't any good," recalls his brother-in-law Bob McDonald. "It was getting to be a point where there was no money count in."

Despite their financial difficulties, the Walkers paid \$165,000 in 1978 for their late father's old fieldstone home, a two-story, five-bedroom dwelling standing on 36 hectares of land just outside Paris. That same year, the couple incorporated Walker's Financial Services, a company they had formed several years earlier to prepare income tax returns and provide bookkeeping services for small business. Walker's Financial began to expand rapidly after acquiring a number company called Ontario Incorporating Systems at Woodstock in December, 1980. The financier looked for companies to purchase, and by the end of the 1980s his firm had branches in nine southwestern Ontario communities, including London, Kitchener and Stratford.

Walker also diversified by selling mutual funds, investing in mortgages and providing advice on wealth management. In September, 1988, Walker founded United Capital Corp., registered in the Cayman Islands, and in his promotional literature he promised "considerable tax savings." He planned to purchase Canadian government bonds and pay out their earnings in the form of higher share prices, so investors would have a capital gain, where only half the value was taxable, rather than simply receive interest, which is taxable in full. The founder invested in 50 million equity, mainly from friends and associates, and made high-risk investments that lost money, police investigators say.

According to one investigator, KPMG Cal. Ralph Kirk, Walker's character and behavior changed in 1986 after two couples, who were personal friends, entrusted him with a total of \$87 million realized from the sale of firm properties north of Toronto. In January of that year, he sold an estate for 84 million for Robert Staley, a retired Ontario government officer, and his wife, Elizabeth, who now live in Southville, Ont., 60 km north of Toronto. They turned over \$5 million to him to invest and manage for them.

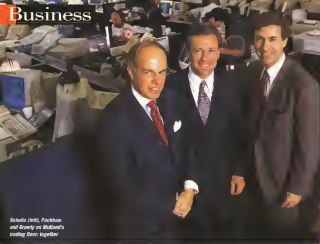
Elizabeth Staley told Maclean's that she and her husband became friends with the Walkers in the 1970s while living in Ayr and attending the same church. She said they introduced him to her brother and his wife, Bill and Sheila Richardson, who owned a farm near Guelph,

Sherna Walker, now 22, lives alone with her two daughters, Emily and Lily, in her mother's home in Ayr. She is pictured here with her father, Albert, in 1981, before he fled Canada.









Scholtz (left), Frackman and Grouty on Midland's trading floor together

# Return of the bull

## A Wall Street giant swallows Midland Walwyn

BY KIMBERLEY NOBLE

How's this for a long-range forecast? In 1989-1990, when a mid-sized Canadian investment brokerage called Midland Dabney Financial Corp. was running on empty, management did the rounds of all the big banks and investment firms in an attempt to sell enough due to equity to keep the firm going. Only legendary New York stock picker Alexander Christie agreed to a deal. His firm, Mackenzie Financial Corp., one of Canada's largest mutual fund companies, paid roughly \$20 million for a 20-per-cent stake in what was soon to become Midland Walwyn Inc. "I think it's a good investment," Christie told Midland's top executives when they sat back their bargain in the spring of 1990. "I'll buy it." Then he made a prediction: "I'm going to buy this stock now, and Tim going to sell it to Merrill Lynch at the end of the 1990s."

Until last week, this was Ray Street's idea of a great punch line. Merrill Lynch & Co., the world's largest investment broker, had

spent a fortune building and promoting its Canadian operation during those *Dynasty* of the 1980s days in the mid-1980s, only to pull out for reasons as soon as the good times ended. As recently as two weeks ago, financial executives discussed speculation about a Midland takeover after tracing the rumors back to Midland's own brokers and traders, who were selling their own and clients' shares while the rumors swirled. From \$20 as early Jan., Midland stock jumped to more than \$27 when the rumors reached critical mass on June 19.

But the Midland-Merrill merger, it turns out, was no joke. After a weekend of intense negotiations, executives from the two firms called brokers on the morning of June 20 to announce that they were indeed joining forces. At a news conference held simultaneously in Toronto and New York City, Midland chairman Robert Scholtz and president William Frackman (who will remain chief executive and chief operating officer of the new organization) unveiled Merrill's plan to buy Midland—bank, stock and loan-based brokers—over what amounts to \$1.26 billion in Merrill stock, the highest price ever

paid for a Canadian investment dealer. Pending regulatory and shareholder approvals, Midland, the largest full-service independent investment firm in Canada, will be absorbed into Merrill's growing global empire some time before the end of the year.

Midland's 3,240 employees—"local patriots" in the words of Merrill president Herb Alkon—are being assured that there will be no layoffs, and that the organization they built will continue to grow and thrive, albeit under a new name: Merrill Lynch Canada. Yet the merger will inevitably trigger changes. From now on, retail investors can no longer do business with a non-independent Canadian firm; they have the choice of dealing with a bank subsidiary or with Merrill. The merger also makes the first time a big U.S. investment brokerage has bought a major Canadian investment firm, as opposed to setting up its own operation. Among other things, the high-profile return to Canada of Merrill Lynch will make it easier for Canada's banks to make the case for their own proposed mergers—"the argument is being that they need to become bigger to stand up to foreign competitors."

Merrill and Midland executives talk as though this is already an epic turning point in Canada's financial services history. The agreement inspired some of the country's shrewdest and most ruthless stockbrokers to wax poetically. "It occurs as if by the moon and the stars lined up for us at this particular hour," Merrill chairman David Kozlowski said. Scholtz was only marginally less effusive. "We believe in the future of the financial services industry and we will not step out on our competitors with a goal to become Canada's No. 1 financial services firm," Scholtz clearly regrets that Midland's successful "Blue chip thinking" slogan and logo will disappear in favor of Merrill's stylized bull. "Blue chip" was a

## THE ART OF THE DEAL

The takeover of Midland Walwyn Inc. by Merrill Lynch & Co. is the latest in a series of mergers and takeovers that have reshaped the Canadian brokerage industry.

► **SEPTEMBER, 1987:** Geopel Shields & Partners of Vancouver joins with McDermid St. Lawrence Securities Ltd., also of Vancouver.

► **JULY, 1987:** Toronto-based CIBC Wood Gundy Securities Inc. acquires Oppenheimer & Co. of New York City for \$735 million.

► **AUGUST, 1986:** RBC Dominion Securities Inc. buys Richardson Gwynedd of Canada Ltd. of Toronto for \$450 million.

► **JULY, 1984:** Bank of Montreal acquires Burns Fry Ltd. for \$403 million and merges it with its brokerage affiliate, Roubin-Thomson Inc.

► **MAY, 1980:** Midland Dabney Financial Corp. and Walwyn Inc. merge, through a share swap.

► **FEBRUARY, 1989:** National Bank buys Geoffrey Leclerc Inc. for \$215 million and merges it with Lanigan Securities, which it bought in 1988.

strong brand marketing campaign," he said. "But nothing in our work is as strong as that bull."

The enthusiasm, however, was not restricted to those with a personal financial stake in the deal. Scholtz emerged from the negotiations with \$31.5 million worth of Merrill stock, while Mackenzie Financial stands to reap \$140 million in profit. Deal managers praised the transaction because it brings a powerful equity leader into the Canadian market. Even top executives of the bank-owned dealers—in no position these days to dump on anybody else's merger plans—made positive (if not exactly welcoming) noises. It was left to Geoffrey Herman, the former chairman of Toronto-based broker Leeman Christie McCutcheon—who, like Midland's Scholtz, once worked for Merrill Lynch—to sum up the one-bank point of view. "It's fantastic," Herman says. "It's nice to see a high-quality organization back in town that's not a bank. It will sort of level the playing field for the consumer."

When people like Herman talk about the consumer, they generally mean big corporate clients. Those customers, however, do not have much trouble finding investment firms willing to compete for their business. The past 15 years have seen a proliferation of so-called products and services offered to corporations and institutional investors. Cross-border financing, a hot trend of the 1990s, means that Canadian companies have become accustomed to popping down to Wall Street for financial help.

Retail customers are an entirely different story. Despite the boom in mutual funds and other retirement savings products, the list of middle-income savers has been steadily shrinking for more than a decade. The banks grabbed up most of the big retail brokers in the late 1980s. Big U.S. firms such as Merrill, Prudential-Bache and Dean Witter Reynolds highlighted it back to New York. This is what allowed Midland Walwyn to become such a significant player in the first place. The company did phenomenally well, hitting roughly a 30th of Canada's corporate finance deals and going directly after small shareholders. This firm now has more than 600,000 client accounts containing \$42 billion in assets, up from \$6 billion in 1990.

While much of that growth can be attributed to the bull market, there is no doubt that Midland has worked hard for its money. Had it ignored Merrill's offer, the firm would have had a shot at becoming the third-largest broker in Canada after the two big bank competitors. But management was aware that as an independent going concern with the banks, the firm could be finding itself in a sticky situation by 1995. "Midland was never there to be a tough strick-ahead. It's good to know we're with guys who know how to swim."

Scholtz is satisfied that last week's arrangement secures Midland's future. He's confident that Merrill is not just making a short-term investment to take advantage of the low Canadian market. Merrill executives such as Robert Kennedy—who took over the work from the American firm's longtime Canadian group in Toronto and who now becomes deputy chairman of the new company—are determined to build their shop into the leading investment dealer in Canada. "The world is a very different place today than it was in 1990," Scholtz told Mackenzie's "And Merrill is a very different company." Rather than running a few international operations from a New York base, the company has been buying up mid-sized brokers in markets such as Hong Kong, Japan and sales personnel, including Britain and Australia. And for firms looking home at the first sign of trouble, the company made a bold move recently by taking over Japan's failed Yamachi Securities and announcing it plans to invest \$227 million in the bankrupt brokerage over the next two years.

After spending eight years building Midland into a major Bay Street player, Scholtz and Frackman have a few emotional stakes in the new firm. They're the first people to have worked for the firm where they were banging up against a wall," Christie says. "Now they have the size and the capital and the expertise of the Merrill organization behind them." This time, he is leaping in to oblige to predict how it will turn out. □



## MOLSON GOES CANADIAN

Just in time for Canada Day, Molson Composites paid \$1 billion to Australia's Foster Brewing Co. to regain full control of Molson Breweries Ltd. The buyout makes Molson the only major Canadian-owned brewer, a feat the company intends to play up in competition with Belgian-owned John Labatt Ltd.

## EATON'S ON TRACK

Executives at T. Eaton Co. Ltd. predicted that the company will hit its yearly profit target of \$50 million even though it reported an operating loss of \$22.2 million for the quarter ending on May 31. While its sales rose 6.3 per cent in that period, Eaton reported that total department store sales were up 11.4 per cent in the first three months.

## CALL-NET CONNECTS

Call-Net Enterprises, which owns Sprint Canada, has won the day in its takeover battle with Toronto's Canada's third-largest alternative long-distance carrier. After long sparring, Call-Net's advances, Toronto's board recommended that shareholders accept the \$1.8-billion offer.

## CUTS AT COREL

Ottawa-based Corel Corp. is closing its Utah engineering centre and transferring the work to Ottawa and other locations, for a net loss of about 240 jobs. Corel, which acquired the Utah facility two years ago when it bought WordPerfect, reported a net loss in the second quarter of \$12 million, or 20 cents a share. Analysts had predicted a loss of 20 cents a share.

## MICROSOFT WINS A BATTLE

A U.S. federal appeals court ruled that Microsoft can bundle its Internet browser with the Windows operating system. The ruling, part of a continuing antitrust battle, came only before the release of Windows 95. About 3,000 people in seven cities across Canada turned out for the launch, which featured Bill Gates live by satellite from San Francisco.

## ONE LESS MERGER

Petro-Canada and Ultramar have called off their planned merger. The decision came after federal regulators said they could not see a way to restructure the deal to ease concerns about the effect on competition.

## GM digs in for the long haul

General Motors Corp. threatened covert action to end what it called an illegal strike by 9,300 workers at two parts plants in Flint, Mich. United Auto Workers union officials dismissed GM's move as a publicity stunt, arguing the world's largest automaker has already stated the matter is legal. The dispute has crippled the auto giant's North American operations, forcing the layoff of 148,000 GM workers, including 11,000 in Canada.

Analysts say lost production due to the strike is costing GM more than \$100 million a day. Settling in for a long battle, GM ordered a "cold shutdown" of plants across the continent, telling factory managers to lay off non-essential workers, scrap plant maintenance and cut back on electricity to limit a "serious cash drain" on the company.

The shutdown directive does not affect GM's Oshawa, Ont., truck plant, where production of



War of words: GMN president Stephen Foltz

its next-generation full-line pickups is under way. A second round for the pickups—among the automaker's best-selling and most profitable vehicles—is considered critical for GM. But Canadian Auto Workers union president Russ Blagrove told a UAW conference that workers at the Oshawa truck plant will not handle parts made from dies GM removed from one of the Flint plants in anticipation of a strike. Such a boycott would be illegal under Canadian law.

## A cable deal for AT&T

AT&T Corp. announced plans to take over U.S. cable giant Tele-Communications Inc. in a roundabout step to get back into the U.S. local telephone market. Ma Bell, which was pushed out of local phone service in 1982 by government decree, will pay \$16 billion in stock and cash to take on TCI's \$35.9-billion debt. "Today, we're beginning to answer a big part of the question about how we will provide local

service to U.S. consumers," said AT&T chairman Michael Armstrong.

The purchase, which gives AT&T 14 million cable customers across the United States, is the most dramatic sign so far of the trend towards convergence of telephone and cable services. In Canada last week, the CRTC awarded New Brunswick Telephones the first-year license to send cable-television signals over its telephone network to Saint John and Moncton. Similar plans have been put forward in other provinces.

## FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Canadian incomes are rising, but only a bit faster than the rate of inflation. In April, the average weekly pay for a Canadian worker was \$609.49, or a 1.6-per-cent higher than in April, 1997. Over the same 12-month period, the consumer price index rose 0.6 per cent.

The growth in incomes is helping to fuel a spending spree. Retail sales in April rose one per cent from March, exceeding economists' expectations. Auto sales, powered by manufacturers' discounts, accounted for two-thirds of the increase.

Despite the apparent health of the economy, foreign investors sold \$6.7 billion in Canadian bonds in April and \$4.7 billion in stocks.

"The huge sell-off by foreign investors likely played a big role in driving the Canadian dollar back below 70 cents

U.S. \$ in the month. The persistent weakness of the currency suggests that the cost of sales will continue."

—Nasdaq Bureau

"The consumer spending boom remains afloat. This was the stage for another healthy annualized increase in consumer spending."

—TD Bank

## WEEKLY EARNINGS

Average pay monthly, April, 1997, to April, 1998

2.6% Salaries employees

0.7% Hourly paid workers

"Retail sales were led by the western provinces with Alberta up 2.6 per cent month over month and B.C. sales rising 1.7 per cent."

—Scotiabank Capital Markets

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# Personal Finance

## Driving a better deal

The stereotypical car salesman—complete with plaid pants and white shoes—is a scary sight for some. But relief may be waiting online. The recent emergence of Internet auto-buying services promises to drastically change the way cars are bought and sold in Canada. In the United States, where such services are more established, 16 per cent of new-car buyers last year consulted Internet auto-buying sites.

The biggest such service online, Calif.-based AutoByTel Corp., which opened its Canadian Website ([www.autobytel.ca](http://www.autobytel.ca)) earlier this year, The service works by collecting information from consumers—name, phone number and desired car model—and passing it on to a nearby dealer that has paid the company for the exclusive right to handle referrals in that district. In return, the dealer agrees to offer a no-haggle discount on the suggested retail price, although the precise amount is left to the dealer's discretion.

Another Web site that began operating re-



In the showroom the online services are not necessarily a bargain.

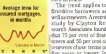
cently is Markham, Ont.-based AutoDepot ([www.autodepot.ca](http://www.autodepot.ca)), a private leasing firm that offers online price quotations and applications. The company promises to match lower-cost lease agreements if customers discover one within 30 days of signing an AutoDepot lease.

While online services can save buyers the hassle of bargaining, some guarantee the lowest possible purchase price or lease rate. In some cases, the discounts do not even match the leasing or loan incentives offered by manufacturers and dealers. Buyers who are ready to wheel and deal may still be able to negotiate a lower price.

## Lengthy loans

Long-term mortgages—those running five years or longer—are more popular with Canadian home buyers now than at any point in the past 30 years. With interest rates near record low levels and inflation all but nonexistent, the difference between long and short-term interest rates has narrowed to about a half a percentage point. This smaller "hook" premium—combined with widespread concern about the possibility of rising rates—is encouraging borrowers to opt for longer mortgage terms, says Ali Nousochian, senior economist with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. in Ottawa. In the first three months of 1998, the

average term for new loans insured under the National Housing Act increased to almost five years. "The interest rates remain low in the near future," Nousochian predicts. "An increasing number of borrowers could opt for terms of seven, 10 and even 35 years."



both cases, that represents an increase of about three percentage points since 1995. Until the 1990s, mortgages were generally closed and were available only for terms of 25 or more years.

# Money Talks

## High-tech tax break

Small-business owners who want to avoid computer chaos in the year 2000 can lighten their tax load, too. Ottawa is allowing firms with assets under \$10 million to write off, immediately, the full cost of computer hardware or software purchased to replace equipment that could malfunction in 2000. Previously, only a portion of the cost could be deducted in the year in which the goods were purchased. The policy applies to most home-based businesses and covers equipment purchased between Jan. 1, 1998, and June 30, 1999.

## Rent check

Saint John, N.B., is the cheapest metropolitan area in Canada in which to rent a two-bedroom apartment, according to a survey of 14 communities by Fitzthum & Co., a Toronto-based consulting firm. An 800-square-foot apartment in Saint John costs an average of \$420 a month. A similar unit in Newfoundland, the most expensive rental market in Canada, averages \$1,050 a month.

## Average monthly rent



## Less to spend

Canadian families earned an average of \$45,032 after taxes in 1996, down five per cent from the 1990 peak after adjusting for inflation. While gross income increased slightly, income taxes reached an all-time high and government payouts declined. The tax bill for the average family in 1996 was 20.5 per cent of total income, up from 19.8 per cent in 1990. Income from governments averaged \$6,641, down 6.5 per cent from the 1990 peak.

## What's On Your Mind?



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**FORECAST:** RETAIL SALES Canadian merchants will likely see 1998 sales rise five per cent over last year's levels, according to the J. C. Williams Group, a Toronto-based consulting firm. Sales in the first four months of 1998 were 5.6-per-cent higher than a year earlier, but demand is expected to tail off towards the end of the year due to slower sales of automobiles and home furnishings, says Ali Oukouss, a partner with the firm. Last year, sales rose seven per cent over 1996 levels.

# Call of the wild

The new frontier of travel, ecotourism aims to stretch the mind, body and soul



While watching, Mahe Pihle (right) is freed by the realness of the baby boomers

BY CHRIS WOOD

It is cold. It is gray. It is raining. It is everything a vacation day should not be. But for half a dozen people aboard into a crude wood-frame and plastic sheet shelter on a hillside above Nanaimo, B.C., none of that matters. Their attention is captured instead by a dense forest of lacy palm fronds. The great plants once flourished nearby. Now, they are etched in breathtaking detail across a shaggy boulder. Lit by a single electric bulb, the fusible—captured in brown-colored stone—glow with a litig presence that defies antiquity. The effect is like looking through a two-story picture window 35 million years into the past, to when the earth was warmer and drier than a greenhouse in the scorched birth of paleo-archaeologist Richard Heide, pointing this two-day tour offered by the Royal British Columbia Museum, finds a moral in the moment. "If we don't make it," he murmurs, "fundamentally it doesn't matter—because something else will."

It is the kind of moment a rapidly expanding group of tourists are paying good money to experience. Basking in hot steel with a cold margarita nearby may still dominate many vacation fantasies. Conventions and cruise ships may still cast a larger shadow in

travel industry spending statistics. But so type of tourism is hotter among industry insiders, and more in growing faster or at least more attention from suddenly interested governments. This what is known loosely in the trade as "ecotourism."

By no means does all of it involve details. Canadian ecotour operators also hawk clients through the frigid crystal waters of the Bahamas. They carry them—safely—within overboard range of polar bears and killer whales, and introduce them to the private lives of bats and beetles. They sail them down pristine northern rivers, hike them through the Andes, and serve them salmon Hellbark style on a beach near Bella Bella, B.C. They stroll through the tundra and let them come, awe-struck, at the northern lights. "It's not always comfortable. It's not always fast," observes wilderness guide Ken Rice of the eco-travel he has led by bike, raft and kayak from his base at Vancouver for the past four years. "But it is always rewarding."

The rewards may or may not include a tan. They always include something for the mind, as a burgeoning class of travelers deemed to be stretched not only physically, but intellectually and even spiritually before they judge their vacation complete. What industry

types call the "interpretive" element of ecotourism may open vacationers' eyes to wildlife or local flora. Often, it involves a glimpse into the culture of the First Nations, a group only beginning to awaken to the economic opportunities represented by the growing interest in native heritage. Sometimes it can be an experience that changes a traveler's very soul. But in whatever form it takes, asserts Rick Lennox, vice-president of Tourism B.C.: "Ecotourism is an educational experience. It's an emotional experience."

And one that has occasionally caught the notice of entrepreneurs and governments alike. The World Tourism Organization, based in Madrid, found in a recent study that global spending on ecotourism was increasing by 30 per cent a year—about six times the average rate of growth for the tourism industry. The most recent domestic estimates are from earlier in the decade, when the Canadian Tourism Commission found that ecotourism and adventure travel (loosely related category usually involving more exertion) were outperforming all other types of travel, as well as the economy as a whole. The conclusion has since prompted

several provinces as well as Ottawa to give ecotourism top priority for themselves and development.

Like so many other trends in the post-industrial century, ecotourism can be blamed on the baby boom. Most ecotourists are in their 30s and 40s, with more travellers above that range than below it. Wherefore so active a race. Most enjoy above-average incomes and education, and have traveled widely already to more conventional destinations. Now, they are looking for something different.

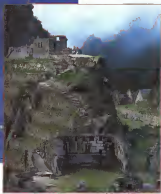
"There is an urban angst and I find a very fast-paced life, a lot of busyness," says Tim Vot, a 39-year-old reporter of bed linen wheat grown in a Philadelphia. "I like to get completely away from civilization when I have time on my own. It helps me clear my head and slow down." Vot has found the wide-open spaces he seeks in the remote corners of Patagonia and the northern tip of Baffin Island, where he travelled by dog sled on a vacation last year. In June, Vot joined a sea-kayaking expedition to explore the pristine inlets and hunting bird heritage sites of British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands.

Along on the same trip was Doris Garrell, a 61-year-old grandmother of five from Williams Lake in the B.C. Interior. On holiday from her job seeking legs at a moment, Garrell was making her second visit to the national park reserve area. Last fall, she visited there, an abandoned black village on the island's east coast. "That really stayed with me," she says. "It was so sad, and the feeling just got stronger and stronger." She returned in June in part to learn more about the Haida and partly to gain experience at kayaking—an activity she plans to take up on her own, but mostly, she says she returned for "the beauty, the power and the peace of it."

The emotive words reflect an experience many travellers find can strike unexpectedly deep. "You're taking people who could be very successful in their own world, maybe a chief executive or a doctor," observed Rice, one of two guides on Garrell and Vot's trip, "and you put them in a context where they can't survive on their own. Here, it doesn't matter how much money you have, or what you do. You're just people. There's a kind of renewal that happens."

Grade Ian Kinn, who leads groups by raft or canoe of the wild at and most remote streams in British Columbia and Alaska, has had the same sort of experience. "You're in the middle of a 45-million-acre wilderness and you're the biggest community there, and you're 15 people. That's quite moving," Kinn says. "It's good for our soul because we know it's wild. The animals are still moving freely, it hasn't been destroyed." Most people, he says, need four or five days in the wilderness just to let go of urban baggage.

The experiences happen in the next four days. Not all, needless to say, find their soul renewed. But there is no denying the consequences that can develop around a campfire, even among a group of strangers, after a bare-chilling day of outdoor exertion. With that in mind, Kinn has begun marketing his river trips to corporations that need to bring groups of senior executives closer together. Sedbury, Ont. based gold Beth Mann has taken the same suggestion in a different direction, leading



## TRAVEL

time-to-seven-day canoe trips through Northern Ontario for visitors only for the past seven seasons. Single-gender groups (with an "opportunity for intermixed boating"). Mains (because "the trips are rowdy. There's a certain level of humor we stoop to, and a lack of inhibition I don't think would happen in a mixed group.")

For travel/eco search of vacations with a deeper meaning, add in two other important qualities. One is respect for environmental protection. Ken's river clients pack all waste—including solid human waste—back to civilization with them. In the Queen Charlotte Islands, Rice's charges receive detailed instructions on how to defecate in the intertidal zone without leaving obvious traces.

Concern for the land is closely tied to a conservation theory to consider for local, and especially stronger, inhabitants. Main, Rice and Plink all make a point of including the role of local First Nations prominently in their interpretations of the areas where they guide. A 15-day trek through the Porcupine Mountains appeared by Toronto-based G.A.P. Adventures Inc., says spokeswoman Natalie Lachance, "is not just to be a discovery's journey. On river trips, we hike the Iron Trail for three days." Local guides accompany the group to Machu Picchu and other sites "to make relevant what's out there before you, and give a bit about the landscape."

To a small but growing number of native bears, eco-tourism's curiosity about things a long way has yielded opportunity. In Bella Bella, 300 km north of Vancouver in an area of the B.C. coast considered "wilderness," G.A.P. Adventures' Frank Rivers offers expeditions in traditional seagoing canoes, wetsuits camping and a salmon feast on the beach that Rivers describes as "an immersion into coastal native lifestyle." Other audio groups have reached coastal wilderness in northern Quebec, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories as well.

The high-sounding appeal of ecotourism—a category that blurs into "discovery" and "recreation" based, as well as adventure tourism—did not come with a prohibitively high price. Expeditions to remote locales for extended stays can be expensive: rafting Alaska's Flycatcher River with Ken costs \$4,100 for two weeks—an up of the price of a first-class ticket on the west. On the other hand, G.A.P.'s Adzean trek, where accommodation is modest but mostly indoors, runs about \$300 a day in addition to airfare

Growing with Mollie goes for about the same, though most of her customers drive from homes in southern Ontario. Shorter outings usually cost less—but not always. A day-long excursion by air from Winnipeg to view polar bears at Churchill costs a whopping \$800, a day with a scientist from the Royal B.C. Museum as little as \$42.

Like all good business practices, ecotourism comes with addition and innovation. Proper certifying for a rafting or kayaking expedition can run to several hundred dollars for a quick-drying, all-synthetic wetsuit. The boom in outdoor travel of all kinds has produced a range of outdoor equipment retailers. Vancouver-based Mountain Equipment Co-op supplies 4,000 expeditions, and outdoor items, from camp stoves to kayaks, at outlets in Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. In the last few years, aviation operations manager Bob Mollie, "every one of our stores either has gone, or is about to go, to larger premises."

Editor Kitha Ferguson has reservations about the word "ecotourism"—but none about the surge in travelers leaving the beaten path in search of something more meaningful than souvenir. Ferguson and publisher Christopher Frey launched their Toronto-based travel quarterly *Outdoor* two years ago, precisely to serve a growing interest in alternative vacations. A recent story profiled a park ranger school in South Africa where holidaygoers can learn how to track big game. Ecotourism, she says, "has become a bit of a buzzword. People have been doing this for a long time. It's just now being marketed as that, and becoming an industry." But by any name, she says, "the research we have been doing shows that it just keeps going."

Governments plainly agree. New Brunswick recently began promoting sites chosen for ecotourism appeal under the slogan "The Outdoor Network." Among the destinations is the red-tiled, whitewashed site of La Pêche de l'Île, located, 15 km long, in the eye of the Northumberland Strait, home to blue-winged teal and lake herring. "Our goal," says Outdoor Network executive Joel Richardson, "is to keep people here longer, instead of them heading off to Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island. Catering to the ecotourist is what's doing it for us."

Next door, 15 km long, is the eye of the Northumberland Strait, home to blue-winged teal and lake herring. "Our goal," says Outdoor Network executive Joel Richardson, "is to keep people here longer, instead of them heading off to Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island. Catering to the ecotourist is what's doing it for us."

But it is British Columbia, where lifestyle makes a place more religious, that has done best to create a hobby official climate for



## The bear patrol

August and September are busy months for Cree guide Sam Hunter, the season when polar bears are at their greatest abundance along the western coast of Hudson Bay. Staggering in a sort of weird hibernation, the bears await the freeze of the bay that will allow them to begin roaming across the Arctic to hunt seals. Based in Pelly, a community of about 300, Hunter's Hudson Bay Polar Bear Park Expeditions offers small six-day tours into the tundra to see beluga whales, hundreds of species of birds, waders and, of course, the white bears. At a cost of \$2,250—including flights—guests get to hike in cervine topologies and learn to make arrows or waders. Hunters' decoy Hunter says there is little danger of the huge canines attacking. "We Cree have lived around the bears all our lives. We know how to predict their movements."

To first sites of traditional knowledge, native eco-tourism is now adding some new understanding. "When we started running the excursions, we discovered the Europeans like the Cree cultural experience," says Hunter, "but the Americans are more interested in sightseeing and taking a lot of photography." He has also learned that many of the Europeans willing to spend the money to visit. He made some of Ontario land to be registered—a clientele not interested in the camp life of goose, fish and sometimes canoe. "We need to get into the experience more," he says, "but we don't know anything about that. We're making more sense."

JOHN GRADIS



Seas: And the courage to turn her belly up for vacation

## Backyard business

Nancy Seas grew up in St. Martins, N.B., on the doorstep of one of Canada's national parks. The village of 450 is lovely at the end of the road: the 40 km separating the community from Fundy National Park marks the last stretch of undeveloped shoreline along the eastern seaboard and affords stunning views of 300-m fjords, the highest tides in the world and striking porpoises. Soville Seas pursued a number of careers—strutted a day care worker, an occupational therapist and a graphic designer—her abiding passion was to explore the virgin territory around her. But it wasn't until a friend opened a country inn at St. Martins in 1990 and asked Seas to serve as a hike guide, that the mother of three realized her hobby could also be her vacation. She smiled in "My reaction here, 'People pay you for that? To go for walks in the woods?'"

No longer. Over the past eight years, Seas has built a thriving

ecotourism. It helps that the B.C. government, out of a variety of motives, has created 253 new provincial parks and protected areas in the 1990s—the most recent a vast mosaic of untouched riparian, mountain and high alpine at the northern end of the Rocky Mountains set aside last October. With less fanfare, legislation introduced last May is meant to clarify the rules and standards appropriate for commercial tour operations on Crown land.

The federal Canadian Tourist Commission has done a thing or two as well. Early on, it produced a glossy catalogue of First Nations-led discoveries and destinations designed to appeal to ecotourists. More recently, it has produced a series of guides that show the ways to find aboriginal culture, drive, canoe, hike and other activities. American tourists seek out spectacular photo ops. Then in May, the commission formed an industry organization that will develop clearer standards for eco- and adventure tourism.

That goal matters. Seas analyzes her clients' kind of "eco-tourism" and has plenty of what the industry terms "new inventory"—whether it be in the form of hidden lakes in central Newfoundland or

business, family hiking and Nature Tours Inc., by giving visitors a glimpse of her backyard. The company offers hiking, naturalist and birding expeditions, lasting from five to 17 days, that combine breathtaking scenery with insights into the area's human history, geology, flora and fauna, and wildlife. While some of the most dramatic scenery is in Quebec, and Cape Breton Island, the Quebec remains on the Bay of Fundy and its scalloped coastline, forged over centuries by enormous tides that can run as high as a four-story building.

Seas's customers fit the ecotourist mold: the outdoorsy, yachting and even the odd social scientist among her clientele. Many, says Seas, are high-powered individuals looking for a vacation from being in control. "I had a vacation from being in control."

"He'd stop on his own, stop and fall. Finally, I told him, 'When I am at your opening room, I will tell you what to do. You are at my opening room—do as I say.' He looked at me in great relief and said, 'Thank you for putting me in my place.'"

Seas is an outspoken advocate of ecotourism, seeing it as an environmentally friendly way of generating much-needed jobs and revenue for small rural communities. But she fears the pressure to open up wilderness areas will destroy the very resources that entice the ecotourist. She points with particular alarm to construction already under way as a multi-purpose trail and paved pathway linking St. Martins to Fundy National Park. "This is exactly the sort of thing my customers do not want to see," she says. "Governments have to decide what kind of tourism they want. Will it be quality or quantity? We have a choice to make, and we better make it soon."

BRIAN BERGMAN

## TRAVEL

the conservation areas that are dotted like green oases across the urban sprawl of southern Ontario. But research compares many commercial ecotour offerings in this country poorly against international competition from Australia, New Zealand and Costa Rica—all of which make the sector a priority in domestic aid. As awareness of the hottest market in ecotourism has struck in Canada, new vendors ranging from book and museum to unemployed ex-hunters have flooded into the business. Georges Koss, "It's a bit of a gold rush."

The rush has raised fears that not all new entrants may live up to their promise—or promise. "Those who have been in it for some time," says Peter Kungur, the Sedona, Arizona-based ecotourism specialist who is chairing the commission's working group, "want to make sure that those who come in for the trend don't dilute the product. People are trying to make sure there is some quality control."

Quality is one thing, quantity is another. Ecotourism's growing following risks overrunning some of its most popular attractions. That is especially true when the attraction involves solitude. And increasingly, it means that some would-be visitors are being turned away. In British Columbia, no more than 22 people at a time may venture onto any of the sites in the Gwaii Haanas preserve and only one party a day departs for a trek down the Skeena River in the Far North. Reservations are issued three months in advance to walk the abandoned West Coast Trail, which traces the cliffs and gorges of the Pacific Inland of Vancouver Island. They sell out, says Leman, "by 10 o'clock in the morning of any given day." Still, such limits are necessary, he says, "to maintain the quality of the experience."

It may be tougher to tackle a related problem: the attraction of ecotourists on the charismatic large mammals that are the star attractions of many ecotourism packages. The annual gathering of polar bears along the shore of Hudson Bay, waiting for the sea ice to thicken enough to support them in their hunt for seals, now attracts an equally predictable yearly flock of onlookers to Churchill. "The polar bear sells very well," observes Lorella Chelton, minister deputy minister for tourism and business development in Manitoba. "You can't get in unless you look ahead." The bears don't seem to mind the attention—from a controlled distance. But behind David Hatch has mounted fear for the damage wrought on a fragile arctic plant life by the oversized fires of the bus-sized tourist buggies used to ferry ecotourists to their close encounters with the bears. In Quebec, the Malheur and British Columbia, the multiplying fleets of small, jet-bus-like carry vehicles within solving and adding distance of whales have some naturalists worried that outlying coveys—as many as 100 at a time—may become the victims



Kathleen: evidence of Aboriginal habitation beneath manured lawns

## A guide to past life experiences

The small park in southeast Victoria, the oldest European settlement in British Columbia, seems an odd place to be looking for evidence of prehistoric native society. Even the vegetation—Scottish gorse and Arum introduced by colonists—is foreign. But Royal British Columbia Museum archaeologist Gail Keddie points to the spectacular view from a small cone of rock at the top of the hillside park, a 270-degree panorama extending from the Gulf Islands to the northwest to Esquimalt in the western distance. "From here," he says, "you could watch for pods of whales, for sea lions, or for eagles." Moreover, by analyzing minute chips of rock found in a distinctive fan-like pattern around the lookout spot, Keddie adds, "I was able to determine that at some time in the past, somebody sat right here looking over the hills."

It turns out to be just one of the ways Keddie opens visitors' eyes to the subtle evidence of Aboriginal habitation still visible beneath Victoria's manured lawns and urban con-

crete. And it helps explain the popularity of a three-year-old program of mostly one-day eco-tours offered by the provincial museum. Ranging in price from \$42 to \$69, the trips begin at the museum, located next door to both the provincial legislature and the famed Empress Hotel, then range across southern Vancouver Island. Guides are drawn from the museum's curatorial staff, giving participants a rare opportunity to question a recognized expert about local history—natural and otherwise.

In addition to Keddie's tour of native sites, other museum excursions penetrate caves to visit some of the 10 species of bats known to make their home on the island, forage forest and coastline (in the company of an ethnobotanist) to find and sample edible plants, and visit wave-swept research platforms during storm season to study the power and influences of weather. Most tours, however, take place only once or twice each year, making advance booking essential.

C.W.



But such concerns are slight, compared with ecotourism's potential, asserts Ottawa ecotourism consultant Carolyn Wild. "If you look at the green space on a map, Canada still has a hell of a lot more than most other places in the world," Wild says. Besides, she adds, her Australian accent becoming more pronounced, "Canadians get a little stuck on this idea of pristine wilderness." Ecotourism, she stresses, is a matter of attitude as much as location. "You could find it in Stanley Park."

On, for that matter, in the rain above Nanaimo, under a plain plastic shelter, where a long-haired boulder can still set pale brows ruffling in the jungles of the soul.

PHOTO: JONN GEDDES in Ottawa. ILLUSTRATION: BRANSHAW in Montreal and ARNOLD MORGAN in Halifax

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## TRAVEL

# Paths of history

BY CHRIS WOOD

In a single life, the small group slips beneath the canopy of the forest. Under towering spruce and cedar, the atmosphere is otherworldly: like the ground a carpet of heavy moss, the air scented with the perfume of growing things. The downcast, misty note of a thrush provides a gentle requiem. Then the lead takes upward and the felines are forced to scramble. Five-grooved for exposed roots that anchor a natural ladder leading upward. Suddenly, the lead falls on a trail that leads to the forest floor.

In the green twilight, it takes a moment for the shape to register itself. Then cries of surprise greet the discovery of a half-circle of light, a path across the slope. It is impossible to know how long ago a

governor's aide told the great cedar trunk, roughed out the elegant lines of a sweeping porch or began the long, difficult work following out the center impossible to know either when he gave up—or why.

Even so, the unexpected find makes a moving conclusion to a journey full of unending discoveries. For one of the hikes, it is the last night of a week-long kayak trip through the remote and ruggedly lovely Queen Charlotte Islands, off the northern tip of Canada just south of the Alaska Panhandle. Among the going participants are a doctor, a teacher, an expert navigator and a

log-sawyer, as well as two for whom this is a working vacation. With them are two guides from Vancouver-based Ekowanan Expeditions. The company name, it turns out, is a lucky coincidence: in the era of environmentalism, it is especially useful for "Education and challenge outdoors," a mid-'70s youth program that quickly evolved into a guiding outfit for adults that now runs hikes, bike and kayak tours to a dozen destinations from Haida Gwaii, to the Gulf Islands.

Typical of the travelers is Toronto high school math and played-by-teacher Alan Christie. "I just love the outdoors," says Christie, 34, a longtime canoeist and sea-kayaker. "Plus, I love to see as much of Canada as I possibly can." He has come to

Gwaii Haanas (the Haida name means "place of wonder"), a protected area embracing the southern third of the Charlottes, as much of a treat, more talked-up and a feeling for the archipelago's abundant indigenous life more often on the trip, he is new to ocean kayaking.

It doesn't really matter. Within hours of stepping off a boat plane, even nightbirds meet the sturdy, two-seater watercraft. From then on, each day brings a two- or three-hour paddle before the boats find a cove or sheltered inlet where the boats can be carried above the tide line and tents

pitched on the forest floor. The camp provides the boats, tents and food, two others supply their own sleeping bag, food and camp equipment that their kit and clothing are appropriate to the wilderness.

The crews do not appear that tall oil puffs do, tiny black and white birds, nesting low over the water in the middle distance. Other sightings underscore the fact that this is wild country: a human eye, bald eagle, one. A single bird from low, branches. An other takes slowly over broken branches to disappear into a dense misty scrubby. A quiet evening is broken by soft whispering, a school of herring repeatedly breaking the surface of a bay, only trying to escape a harbor seal and a herring near

gopher duck, no days go by, the artist reflect to check one's watch and wonder why the phone has not rung begins to pass.

In its place, the power and tragedy of the place start to sink in. Located on the western edge of the continental shelf, its climate moderated by the warm Pacific Current, the 150-km island chain afforded a fertile and unassailable fortress home for the Haida for centuries. Wealthy, powerful and predatory, they were fond of murdering low-level mainland tribes, sweeping down in war canoes on hapless targets on their way to north-east. Children to make all with body and the best-looking men. The coming of the first Europeans in 1779, followed that existence. By the beginning of the 20th century, smallpox had reduced an estimated 8,000 Haida to fewer than 800.

At Skung Gwaii, a small island near the chain's southwestern tip, the logskiers come face-to-face with what remains of the Haida's western presence. In a small clearing, signs of Bear, Killer Whale and other gear hauntingly from the weathered grey cedar of a dozen mortuary and ceremonial poles. Recognized as a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1981, the village of Nanaimo housed 20 logskiers. Now the only living presence is a remaining Haida in the nearby woods, one of five Haida in the southern Charlottes where Haida watchmen keep an eye on visitors and share the area's cultural history.

Spending her fourth season as a watchman, Shirley Wilson seldom visits the clearing where the logskiers' island. "I just love them to rest," she says. "Only story and news. Wilson smiles. "I like to have a little fire on the beach, take a little food as an offering, maybe a little tobacco, and ask their logskiers for mirroring." Days later, a visitor who finally turns away from contemplation of the half-drowned canoe in the forest, finds him self hoping that the ghosts are listening, and that they understand. □

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## Alberta rethinks its charter schools after a closure in Calgary



Parents Jane McElgitt (left) and Williams: 'We have clipped our children's wings.'

# A school failure

BY ROBERT SHEPPARD

Schools are not supposed to fail—especially schools where government and educators have invested so much in a high-profile learning experiment. But in May, when Alberta Education Minister Gerry Mar announced the closing of one of its 12 experimental charter schools—schools run mostly by parents with public money—it was a shot heard throughout the burgeoning charter school movement in North America. For some, such as Judy Tibbitts, the straight-talking chairwoman of the Calgary Board of Education, there was a bitter-sweet sense of I told you so: "We have let it from the beginning that charter schools are little pockets of chaos," she said for those families who devoted two years of their lives to Calgary's Global Learning Academy, the collapse of their school meant nothing short of heartbreak. When the announcement came, parents cried on the school steps and some blamed other parents for the demise, and for abandoning Global's 480 students to the vagaries of the public system. "I feel like we gave our children wings," says Kate Williams, one of its parents on the now-defunct Global board. "And now we have clipped them."

Last week, Mar rejected a last-ditch effort by a group representing about 300 Global parents to keep the school alive. "I don't doubt their enthusiasm or their good intentions," Mar told *Macleod's*. "But because of the difficulties that school has had in the past, much of the enthusiasm would have to go to rectifying those problems. And I am not sure that would have been the best use of those efforts."

Global had been in trusteeship since January. Its principal was suspended in December and resigned in May. The largest charter school in the province, it operated with an annual budget of \$61.8 million. But when Global collapsed, it left running but outstanding bills \$35,000 for school supplies, a long-term contract for leased computers, with only the interest paid over the two years of operation, and an unmet portion of a \$25,000 playground that someone, perhaps the province, is going to have to pick up. "The monitoring of the money was never really done," concedes Mar. The province thought the Calgary Board of Education was in firm. The board said it was instructed to take a hands-off approach. The parents at the school became so enamored in their own problems that they never managed to conclude a superintendency agreement with the Calgary board. Mar now says he is planning to spend the next six

months looking at "where we have let the charter schools down."

When the Alberta government launched itself down the charter-school path three years ago—the first and so far only provincial government to embrace this largely American experiment—it was lured as much by a recent victory for parental choice. Still part of the public system, charter schools were supposed to be little oases of creativity in a bland and over-sprayed public school environment. They would receive the same instructional grants as public schools (approximately \$4,000 a student), and follow the same curriculum. But once their plan—their charter—was approved, they could organize themselves however they wanted and, more important, teach the way they wanted, whether experimental or back to basics, with the hope they might incubate some new teaching techniques.

Of the 11 charter schools still operating, the focus ranges widely. At least two are aimed at gifted students, with individualized programs—and one of the two following shows an unique interpretation of what parents offered. Two others are hockey-focused schools with drinks brought from home. Edmonton has a high school of hard knocks for those who have not been able to succeed in other schools; Calgary has an English-as-a-second-language charter school, which is over 90 per cent over Muslim and breaks daily for prayers. And of the 11, at least six have experienced notorious growing pains, including principals who have been expelled or fired, and board members who have been voted out in power struggles. Two are likely to be returned to the sponsorship of Alberta Education this fall as school boards in Calgary and Medicine Hat are refusing to renew or approve the charters. Only two still have a direct supervisory relationship with a local school board, which is what the original vision was supposed to be about.



Kash will charter students welcome a move to stricter standards and closer monitoring.

In the swirling of the charter-school vision, as one thought that these schools would be turned into political options, abandoned by a provincial government that was renegeing, hung out to dry by local school boards who resented the charters as grant-munchers and private-school wannabes. "The provincial government had the original vision," says Lynn Bonetti, director of the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Calgary. "But then the mandate changed and other key people left, and it is not clear now where the university is going. The problem you see now are all signs of government."

In the Global Learning fiasco, the problems would be almost comical if they were not so revealing for those involved. The academy was in charter from the Calgary board in the spring of 1995 and opened its doors six months later. On the first day there were not even desks—the Calgary board was called that morning to see what they could scrounge—and parents walked off a stage area to

make up for a shortage of classrooms space. The original idea for the charter had been that Global would be an English-as-a-second-language facility for Chinese immigrants, perhaps leading a sister school in China. But when it came time to apply for the charter, Global became transformed into a school of "differentiated learning," an innovative technique where students learn in small groups, at their own pace and regardless of age, with teachers acting primarily as facilitators.

One of the early problems was that a developer took a shine to the school and offered to build a second campus. "Too much energy was spent trying to get a second school started without getting the first one going properly," concludes Don Green, an education consultant who helped train the teachers in the start-up period. An older experienced teacher, Green says, was that the differentiated learning concept was sold to small groups of parents at coffee parties and it became clear after a while that not everyone understood the idea the same way, even the teachers.

But the biggest problem was that the original five founders, for reasons that have never been fully explained, voted all legal authority in themselves. As a result, the new parents who were voted in to the board in April, 1997, had no legal authority—which they did not realize at the time. What is more, when the new board voted 6 to 1 to suspend the principal last December after doing its own investigation of certain practices, one of the original founding members quit in protest, leaving the board without a legal quorum to transact business or even change its bylaws. The situation began to unravel a year ago when the newly installed parents' board asked why the school secretary had been given a substantial

raise, doubling her salary to \$50,000, when she made more than Global's 25 teachers were earning.

In January, provincial trustee Lynn Bonetti was called in by the Global board. Her full report to the minister has not been made public, but Mar says it points out that the school's board was in a legal quagmire and that there was no consensus among its 25 members as to what constituted differentiated learning. He has also acknowledged that Bonetti hounded in the police stations to examine more questionable payments.

What went wrong at Global matters, albeit spectacularly, when often growing out of charter schools. A study of the charter movement in the United States, released by the Center for School Change at the University of Miami says in Miami put in March, is cautiously optimistic about the viability of the experiment. Examining the progress of 31 top charter schools—the 194 that have sprung up since 1980—the study concluded that charter schools can improve student achievement in urban, pre-vocative areas, Global's Grade 2 students ranked in the top 10 per cent of Alberta schools, its Grade 6 placed in the top three per cent. According to Jan Nathan, director of the centre, academic issues caused the failure of only one of the 31 U.S. charter schools to have closed. The rest shut up because of financial difficulties or because the proponents could not get along—the so-called issues of governance.

Some see a silver lining in the Global fiasco. "Thirteen students Global received by the summer of 1998. I can see a lot of good coming out of this," says JoAnne Koch, principal of Calgary's ABC Charter Public School for the gifted, which has an operating reserve and is now in no larger space than in the fall. Alberta's author general shares her concerns at three more points, as well as the fact that charter schools have no way of assessing academic improvement, were in his most recent report back in September. It just took the failure of the province's largest charter school to make anyone pay attention. C.

# People

Edited by TANYA DAVIES

## Flourishing far from home

In 1947, artists **Leonard** and **Reva Brooks**, a married couple in their mid-30s, left their native Canada for what was supposed to be a year in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Leonard had recently returned from Europe, where he was an official artist for the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. Frustrated in his job as a Toronto art teacher, he wanted the freedom to create all day. So when Reva discovered the couldn't have children, the couple decided to take a risk and spend some time in Mexico. "I got a grant from the veterans affairs department for \$60 a month," recalls Leonard, now 65. "Reva and I thought we could live more luxuriously in Mexico."

That adventure turned into a permanent change of address. The Brooks are now the unofficial patriarch and matriarch of the large expatriate artist community in San Miguel, where the two have created intergenerationally celebrated work. Leonard's paintings hang in collections around the world. And Reva, 65, is considered one of North America's top female photographers. In fact, the reason for the couple's return to Canada this year is an exhibit of Reva's work at Toronto's Stephen Bulger Gallery and her involvement in a group show at the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in Ottawa, running until Sept. 20. Reva began taking pictures when Leonard bought her a secondhand Leica camera so that she could photograph their travels in Mexico and his paintings. "It was fate," says Reva, who focused on poor mothers and their children in San Miguel. "I never took a picture without first establishing a connection with my subject." By 1950, the couple was so accomplished that the Museum of Modern Art in New York City purchased two of her black-and-white pictures. And in the late 1960s, she was invited to study with photography greats **Edward Weston** and **Ansel Adams** in California. At 22, Reva has eluded the couple in Canada—until now, with the photo exhibits and two forthcoming biographies. Meanwhile, in 1992 the pair established the Leonard and Reva Brooks Foundation at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., to maintain and display their combined work. "We have always felt Canadian," says Reva. "And the funny thing is that in other countries we are always called 'the Canadian artists.'" Now, finally, they are starting to get some recognition at home.

Reva and Leonard Brooks live of creativity in Mexico



## Cancer Man is a nice guy

**Norma Williams B. Davis**, Occupant playing the Cigarette Smoking Man, aka Cancer Man, on *The X-Files* and in the new hit movie based on the television series. Baldest trait: for an actor who plays a nefarious, chain-smoking government operative, Davis is one heck of a nice guy. "I don't know where the character comes from," he says with a good-natured chuckle. "But as an actor, I know one draws from oneself, so it must be in there somewhere."

Then again, Davis is full of surprises. For one thing, he doesn't smoke—the last 30 years ago, and is now a spokesman for the Canadian Cancer Society. And he is a teacher, not a trader at his Williams Davis Centre for Actor's Studies in home-town Vancouver; he encourages "a warming approach." Another out-of-character factoid: Davis, 60, is a Canadian national champion water-ski in his division. And, unlike his shadowy character, Davis claims he doesn't know all the secrets about *The X-Files*—like whether FBI agents Scully and Mulder will ever get together romantically. The reason: he just doesn't know—and neither does anybody else on the show. "We have nearly finished shooting the first part of a two-part episode and we still haven't seen the script for the second—all because it's top secret, but because it's not done yet," says Davis. "We pretty much made it up as we go." Finally, the truth:



Smoking: longtime smoker

## Films



*Twister*: Affleck: a compelling, heart-on-sleeve drama—and lots of mayhem and explosions

## The sky is falling

This blockbuster delivers an adrenaline jolt

### ARMAGEDDON

Directed by Michael Bay

Like the "greenie afflictions and long-necked geese" thingy up far the Ark in that old Irish Rover song, the end of the world is coming in two three days—at least at the movies. First there was *Deep Impact*, about a Manhattan-sized comet on a collision course with Earth. Now there's *Armageddon*, featuring yet another death-from-above rock and yet more karmageddon efforts to save the species from extinction. But there the similarities end: *Deep Impact* was a slow-studded scientific, no-muscle-and-shit-it-made-the-world's-dresses-same-a-consensus-devoted-to be washed, at least thru the movie would rank, too. The latest space-flick, on the other hand, delivers all the gully thrills and adrenaline rushes that a summer blockbuster should. Fast-paced, raucously and heavy, *Armageddon* really rocks asteroid.

The premise would probably make Carl Sagan turn in his grave. A meteor the size of Texas is due to obliterate life on Earth in less than three weeks, and NASA wants to Harry S. Stamper (Bruce Willis), deep-core

oil driller extraordinaire, to fly up to the wayward, second-hand drop a nuclear warhead into its belly. Stamper volunteers a ragtag bunch of roughnecks to help him, including Rockhound (Steven Seagal), a geologist, and A.J. (Ben Affleck), who is in love with the drill boss's daughter, Grace (Liv Ullmann). Wrecking and slightly cerebral, *Armageddon*'s science gallery is a spangly version of *The Day's* *Angels of The Dying* *Doors*—and *Armageddon* has taken a big cut from those sci-fi-decora war movies, capturing their sense of adventure and working-class heroism.

Not that *Armageddon* is in any way remarkable a serious character study. Director Michael Bay returns no opportunity to crank up the effects. But amid the mayhem, the characters do provide a compelling, human-scale drama. Best of all, the movie never loses its sense of humor in our science: the hapless astronaut who discovers the meteor exists on naming it after his wife. Dicks—because "after a vicious, life-threatening battle from which there is no escape." Hey, if the end of the world really is coming, why not have some fun with it?

JOE CHIDLEY

## The slow burn of a sweetgrass spell

### SMOKE SIGNALS

Directed by Chris Eyre

A star being impersonated by other actors in countless westerns, native actors have finally begun to make their own mark in the movies. And many of them—notably Graham Greene and Tatum Cardinal (Dancer With Wolves, Gary Farmer) David Aron and Adam Beach (Dance Like a Cheyenne)—have emerged from Canada's prairie native theatre community. Now *Smoke Signals* and Cardinal co-star in the first movie written, directed and co-produced by North American Indians.

Seattle writer Sherman Alexie based the script on his 1993 book of short stories, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto*. Published as *Smoke Signals*, which won two awards at the Sundance



Beach father-son estrangement

Film Festival earlier this year—in a poetic, understated tale of father-son estrangement. A decade has passed since Victor (Beach) lost his son Victor (Aron), who abandoned his wife (Kathleen) and son after a drunken Fourth of July party. When Victor learns that his father has died in a trailer home in Arizona, he sets out by bus from Idaho's Colter of Anne Indian Reservation to retrieve the ashes. Along for the ride is his friend, Thomas (Evan Adams), a nerd in glasses and glasses with a gift for story telling.

Never does Chris Eyre, a 28-year-old Cheyenne/Navaho from Oregon, creates vivid images, using life as a central motif. *Smoke Signals* spotlights Native from playful racism of Indian stereotypes ("You gotta look stoical") to high drama. The shifts can be abrupt, and the story is slight. But fueled by strong performances, *Smoke Signals* tells a beautiful story of surprising power.

DAVID D. JOHNSON



# Peter C. Newman

## Edgar Jr. just a chip off the old block

**M**uch has been made of how Edgar Jr., the 45-year-old Bronfman who has headed The Seagram Co. since 1996, is switching the family empire from booze to leg, from Crown Royal and Celine Dion to Elton John, U2 and the Three Tenors. Nobody seems to have noticed, but he's just following in his daddy's footsteps.

His father, Edgar Mladen Bronfman, who ran the liquor empire from 1982 to 1996, was killed of cancer. During the 1990s, Edgar Jr. sold his reluctant father, dynasty founder Sara, into paying \$40 million to acquire 25 per cent of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the largest single block of one of Hollywood's major studios (The deal actually took place in a phone call to Les Kolber, his father's financial adviser "Listen, Les, have you got any money?" the then 39-year-old Edgar Jr. asked). The deal bought \$40 million worth of MGM stock.

Sara, whose temper could make boys out of men, ruled his empire with an iron will, but he was a justice at heart—that is, if you forget that his fortune was based on having been Canada's leading bootlegger during Prohibition. He hated the idea of being involved with the sleazy Hollywood lifestyle, and he allowed the name deal to go through, but repeatedly expressed his displeasure with Edgar's impetuous idea.

There was a remarkable exchange between father and son, when Sara couldn't hold his suspension to check any longer, and told him that Edgar Jr. was all she wanted for her marriage, and confronted the deeply tainted movie mogul. "Tell me, Edgar," he said, demanding an answer, "are we buying all this God damn MGM stock just so you can get laid?"

"No, Pop," Edgar shot back. "It doesn't cost \$40 million to get laid."

It may have started out as a lark, but by May, 1999, Edgar had gained enough clout as the MGM board to be named the studio's chairman. Ahead of his time, he undertook to merge it with Time Inc., which had nearly accumulated 50 per cent of MGM's shares as its own. Nearly half a century later, his son tried to grab control of a similar combination.

Just weeks after Bronfman's MGM purchase, a Las Vegas high roller named Kirk Brinkman bought a larger block of MGM stock and forced Edgar out of the company, much to Sara's relief. Edgar's most embarrassing moment was walking into a New York nightclub, where he was spotted by comedian Barbra Streisand, who stopped the show. "Hey, there's Edgar Bronfman, he was chairman of MGM for five whole months!" Edgar said his MGM shares at a profit and es-

tablished Septimus Productions, which made some forgettable, if financially successful films with George C. Scott, Peter Sellers, Elizabeth Taylor and Robert Redford. Edgar then hired Edgar Jr. to run its music division (Downside Music Corp.), which was a link to his son's current preoccupation with the music business (Edgar Jr. is also a sometime songwriter).

Edgar Jr.'s \$125-billion purchase last month of PolyGram NV—the world's biggest record label—has turned Seagram's from a liquor company with subsidiary interests in music, TV and film, into a global entertainment colossus. Edgar has bet the farm. Alvin Karp, the outgoing CEO of PolyGram, has called his business "more dangerous than astrology." The purchase is a big gamble. At stake is the future value of the family's 150 million shares of Seagram stock, now worth more than \$7 billion.

Edgar's most serious personal gamble was his 1995 decision to sell the company's \$11.7-billion stake in E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. in order to buy Seagram's 80-per-cent share of the entertainment conglomerate, MCA Inc. Scuttling the du Pont investment has been attacked by Seagram shareholders because under CEO Chad Filby, the under-performing chemical firm has become a world leader in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. The stock that Bronfman sold for \$11.7 billion is worth \$65 billion now, and investment analysts predict it will double in the next 18 months. Edgar's questionable sale of Seagram's Truistair juice division to help pay for the PolyGram purchase similarly sacrificed an established steady income stream for the wild dreams of the music business.

Charles Bronfman, Seagram's co-chairman, has privately expressed serious doubts about the wisdom of his nephew's controversial tactics. But as a loyal Bronfman, he has cast his influential vote as chairman of Seagram's executive committee behind the move.

What outsiders don't realize is that the Bronfmans, unlike the Karpans or the Seagrans, are most of the other mega-powerful Canadian clans, have found the secret of how family power can be passed on and perpetuated without the infighting that so often weakens family solidarity. One member in each generation is charged with running the business; the exercise of authority by the chosen successor, while carefully monitored, is supreme. He is allowed his run, even Edgar Jr., who ran Seagram's world operations while Charles remained in charge of the relatively small Canadian business.

There has never been any question of rifts between the top. When Sara died in 1991, Edgar and Charles made a private agreement to have one of the morning after his funeral, which is against Jewish tradition forbidding family visits for 30 days after interment. As Charles explained at the time: "We wanted to make a vow over Pop's grave, that we'll always stick together as one unit."

That's how a dynasty survives.

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